

A
CONTINUATION
OF THE
DEFENCE
OF THE
REFORMATION-PRINCIPLES
OF THE
Church of Scotland.

WHEREIN

It is shown, that the Reverend Mr. Currie, in his late *Vindication*, has not entered into the Argument for Secession, as it is stated in the said *Defence*. Wherein also several Questions relating to the present SECESSION are considered; particularly, with respect to the Management of the Judicatories in Matters of Doctrine, their Tyranny in the Administration, their late Sentence against the Seceding Ministers: Likewise it is enquired, whether or not such as are imposed upon dissenting and reclaiming Congregations ought to be received and acknowledged by the Church as lawful and sent Ministers of CHRIST.

By Mr. WILLIAM WILSON Minister of the Gospel
at PERTH.

*Zion, thy God confess, Psal. cxlvii. 12. Paraph. Metre.
Isa. lxvi. 5. Thou Brethren that hated you, that cast you out for
my Name's sake, said, Let the Lord be glorified.*

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CONTINUATION

1578/3159.

DEFENCE

OF THE

REPRESENTATION

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CONTINUATION

OF THE

DEFENCE of the REFORMATION-
PRINCIPLES of the CHURCH of
SCOTLAND, &c.

The INTRODUCTION.



WHEN I published my Answer to the *Essay on Separation*, under the Title of a *Defence of the Reformation-Principles of the Church of Scotland*; I promised in the Conclusion of the said Book, that, if there was Need for it, I would publish an *Appendix* to the said *Defence*, wherein I might consider any Thing material, that had escaped me, which

the Author of the *Essay* had advanced against the Conduct of the *Associate Presbytery*, or their *Judicial Act and Testimony*: But yet, after the most exact Search I could make, I did not find that I had passed by any Thing of Importance alledged in the *Essay* against the Conduct of the *Associate Presbytery*, neither did I find that I had omitted any Thing of Moment which that Author had offered to discredit their *Judicial Act and Testimony*; and therefore I superseded any further Writing upon this Subject, at least till I should see what the Reverend Mr. Currie, Author of the *Essay on Separation*, should bring forth in Defence of himself, and of the Cause of the present Judicatories, which it seems he has undertaken to manage, against the *Associate Presbytery*. And as I was credibly informed he was preparing his Answer to my Book, so he has lately published the

same, under the Title of (what he calls) *A Vindication of the real Reformation Principles of the Church of Scotland.*

When Mr. Currie published his *Essay*, I observed that very much Bitterness of Spirit breathed throughout his whole Book: I choosed rather to neglect the many Evidences of it, than to take particular Notice of them; such as, *Essay*, p. 194. when he alledges, the Brethren's Departure from the present Judicatories was far from being peaceable, says he, "Have they not whet their Tongue like a Sword, and bent their Bows to shoot their Arrows, even bitter Words?" and have they not drawn their Pen, and dipt it in Gall, publishing to the World, that their Mother at this Day "has gone off from the Foundation?" The seceding Brethren have affirmed, and proved in their *first Testimony*, that the Foundations of our Presbyterian Order and Government are subverted, and that Foundation-truths ly wounded and bleeding in our Streets, without any due and suitable Testimony unto them: Because we have laid open these and the like Sins and Defections of the present Judicatories, therefore he vents himself in the above sarcastical Manner against us. But, whatever Bitterness of Spirit was discovered in his *Essay*, it swells without all Bounds in his present *Vindication*. He can scarce write a few Lines of a *Preface*, till the Flame breaks forth; therefore in his *Preface*, l. 6. he gives it as his Opinion, "That my *Defence* is a *common Enemy* to the Success of the glorious Gospel of Christ, from the Mouth of all his sent Servants in this Church, having a direct Tendency to blast their Ministry." Am I in my *Defence* an *Enemy*, yea, and a *common Enemy*, to the Success of the glorious Gospel? &c. This is indeed the peculiar Characteristick of the *grand Adversary* of Man's Salvation: However, it is alleviating to me, under such a heavy Charge, that the Lord and Master of the House was treated after the same Manner; he was called a *Devil*, and *Beelzebub*. And whence was all this Fury and Rage against him? It was, namely, because in his Doctrine he laid open the Sins and Corruptions of the *Jewish Teachers*; and therefore they reckoned, that his Doctrine had a Tendency to weaken their Authority, and to blast their Reputation among the People. Further, when Mr. Currie gives it as his Opinion, that the *Defence* is a *common Enemy* to the Success of the glorious Gospel; I wish he had considered, that the Question betwixt him and me is, Whether a Course of Backsliding from the Lord, persisted in and justified, is not rather to be reckoned an *Enemy* to the Success of the glorious Gospel, than a free and plain

plain Discovery of the Dishonours done to God by a Church, in order to their Reformation from them? It cannot be refused, that the Prophets under the *Old Testament*, and Christ and his Apostles under the *New*, did always lay open the Sins and Corruptions of the *Jewish Church*, their Priests, their Teachers, and People: Hence it is plain, that an Endeavour to lay open the Sins and Corruptions of the Times, is so far from having a Tendency to obstruct the Success of the Gospel, that it is a special Ordinance of God for promoting thereof; and consequently, when Men hide their Iniquity as *Adam*, when they extenuate the Sins and Corruptions of the Time, however eminent they may be, and whatever fair Shews and Pretexts they may make, any Performance of this Kind may justly be reckoned an *Enemy* to the Success of the glorious Gospel. I shall only add, That, as for the above grievous Charge that Mr. Currie has brought against the *Defence*, I sincerely pray that the Thoughts of his Heart, and that the Words that have dropt from his Pen, may be forgiven him; whatever Ill-nature or Bitterness of Spirit he or others may express against the Cause which through the Grace of God I endeavour to defend, I rest satisfied in Faith and Hope, that *surely the Wrath of Man shall praise the Lord*, Psal. 76. 10.

One of the heaviest Charges, that I have brought in the *Defence* against the Author of the *Essay on Separation*, is, That he has reported several Things that are neither *Truth* nor *Matter of Fact*. Yet, when I lay this Charge against him, 'tis done in the most favourable and charitable Manner: Therefore, *Defence*, p. 13. I say, "Tho' I have given several particular Instances of Things advanced by our Author, that are neither *Truth* nor *Matter of Fact*; yet I shall charitably judge, that he conceives what he has wrote to be *Truth* and *Matter of Fact*." I again make the same *Apology* for him, p. 214. But as Mr. Currie was first upon the Field in his *Essay*, so he falls heavy, not upon one Man, but upon a Body of Men; he charges them bluntly with asserting, in their *Judicial Act and Testimony*, Things that are neither *Truth* nor *Matter of Fact*. It might have been charitably presumed, that when some Ministers were met in Judgment, and constitute in the great Name of the Lord, they would have asserted nothing but what at least they conceived to be *Truth* and *Matter of Fact*; But Mr. Currie treats them, as if they had intended in their *Testimony* to deceive or impose upon the World; this Behaviour I take to be another Evidence of that Bitterness of Spirit that runs through his *Essay*.

When I have laid the above Charge against the Author of the *Essay* in the charitable Manner above-mentioned, he thinks fit to resent it after a very singular Manner in his present *Vindication*, where he accuses me of asserting *Untruths, direct and manifest Untruths, Falshoods*, as also of *Slanders, and walking in Slanders*; those, and the like Accusations, the Reader will find everywhere in Mr. Currie's *Vindication*. I shall leave him in the full Possession of such railing Expressions, more like *Billingsgate* than a Minister of the Gospel: I hope I shall guard against returning him an Answer in such a rude Dialect. The Cause I espouse, and which I endeavour through the Lord's Grace to maintain, needs no such Weapons for its Support, which are always an Evidence of a bad Cause, and an exasperated Spirit, where *Railery, Banter* and confident Assertions must supply the Place of Reason and Argument.

I told Mr. Currie, in the Preface to my *Defence*, p. 15. That, if he thought fit to enter into the Question and Argument as I had endeavoured to clear and state the same, I should, if the Lord gave Time and Health, attend him; but if he diverted from the true State of the Question, amusing his Reader with misapplied Quotations from eminent and learned Divines, or with reporting private *Stories* and *Hearsays*, I would reckon I had more important Work on my Hand, than to take any manner of Notice of him. And, when I have considered his *Vindication*, I find that he still perverts the true State of the Question, and that he shifts the Argument; as also, that he deals after his usual Manner, by misapplied Quotations, and by reporting *Stories* and *Hearsays*. I might therefore justly have neglected him altogether: But, since I am persuaded that the Cause which the *Associate Presbytery* have espoused is the Cause of Truth, and that it leans unto our *Reformed and Covenanted* Principles agreeable to the Word of God; I would therefore willingly cast in my Mite, for clearing this despised Cause, of the Dust that Mr. Currie continues to throw upon it; and for the Information of such as are willing, without Prejudice and Biass, to receive it; and likewise, if it were possible, for the Conviction of such as are wilful and obstinate Gainsayers; as also, for the confirming of the Lord's People through the Land, who have joined the *Associate Presbytery* in the Confession that they make of the Truths of our Lord Jesus Christ, in Opposition to the many Injuries that are done them in this Day of general Backsliding and Defection from the Lord: And, for the above Reasons, I have adven-

adventured to write again upon this Subject. And tho' I designed at first only a short *Appendix* to the *Defence*, yet it has swelled so much upon my Hands, partly thro' the Variety of Matter that Mr. Currie brings upon the Field in his voluminous *Vindication*, and partly thro' a more particular Consideration of some Things I judge necessary for clearing the present Subject, that I choosed to give what I have now written the Title of a *Continuation of the Defence of our Reformation-principles*. Where I shall first make some Observes upon Mr. Currie's leading Argument from Authorities; and likewise consider some of the grievous Charges of *Untruths*, *uncharitable Judgings*, and *Inconsistencies*, that he has laid against the *Defence*, together with his usual Manner of Dealing, by reporting private Stories; and then I shall endeavour to evince, that he has not entred into the Question nor Argument as 'tis laid in the *Defence*. And, under each of these Heads, I intend only an Instance or two, to shew the Reader how groundless the Accusations are that he brings against the *Defence*, as also to satisfy him that Mr. Currie has shifted the Argument, as I have plainly stated the same, for the Warrantableness of our Seceſſion from the present Judicatories of this National Church. I hope likewise, that the Instances I shall give will convince the Reader, that it would be an idle Work to pursue Mr. Currie through the several Periods of his *Vindication*.

C H A P. I.

Concerning Mr. Currie's leading Argument from Authorities, and the Accusations of Untruths, &c. that are laid against the Defence.

MR. Currie, in his *Essay and Vindication*, fills his Page with Quotations from great and eminent Men; on every Turn he tells his Reader, This great Man says so, and the other great Man says so. And in his Preface to the *Essay*, p. 7, 8. he alledges he gives the Quotations from them, with their Reasons and Arguments supporting their Sentiments; and therefore he complains loudly in his *Vindication*, p. 5. That I have not attempted to take off the Force of their Authority, except as to a very few in one

Secton; and that I have not answered the Reasons adduced by such great Men, which he reckons I was as much obliged to make Answer unto, as any Thing in his *Essay*, &c. But I gave a Reason, *Defence*, *Pref.* p. 8. why I neglected Mr. Currie's Quotations, *viz.* That the most Part of his Quotations are applied in a Manner contrary unto the Intention and Design of the worthy Authors, if the Connection of the Purposes which they treat, and out of which they are taken, is duly considered. And, to prove this, I thought it sufficient if I gave some Instances from his most considerable Writers: And therefore, *Def.* Chap. 3. Sect. 2. I make Mention of severals of them, such as *Calvin*, *Durham*, *Rutherford* and *Gillespie*; and after I had given some Account from Mr. Baillie of the Principles of the *Sectarians*, against which the Reasonings of the above great Men are pointed, I shew the vast Difference that there is betwixt the Principles upon which the Secession of the Associate Presbytery is stated, and the exploded Principles of the *Sectarians*: And I likewise shew that Mr. Currie's Authorities touch not the Question betwixt the present Judicatories and the Associate Presbytery, but that many of them are directed against the extravagant *Sectarian* Principles that then prevailed. And, to satisfy the Reader that my Observation is just, I shall only consider one or two of these Quotations that Mr. Currie insists upon in his present *Vindication*: The first I mention is a long Quotation from Mr. *Durham*, *Essay*, p. 52. and which stands (*Defence*, p. 194.) thus; "Our Lord Jesus is no Approver or Countenancer of Separation from a *true Church*, for the Faults of some Members in it; neither do Faults in some Members, and Defects in Ministers and Officers in executing Discipline, pollute the Ordinances in themselves, or to others who are free of that Guilt." And here I observe, *Def.* p. 104. That Mr. *Durham*'s Words are plain and pointed against such who affirm, that the personal Facts of joint Worshipers pollute the Ordinances in themselves, or to others: But this is none of the Principles of the Associate Presbytery; neither do they affirm, that Faults in some Members, or Defects in Ministers or Officers in executing Discipline, do pollute the Ordinances in the Manner mentioned. And yet in the same Place I assert, That *Secession* is warrantable and necessary from a particular *Visible Church*, when in her Ecclesiastical Capacity she is carrying on a Course of Defection from Steps of Reformation once attained unto, and at the same Time refusing to be reclaimed. And this Principle

Principle is as far different from the above Sectarian Principle, condemned by Mr. *Durham*, as East is from West. The Reason why I have taken particular Notice of the above Quotation from Mr. *Durham* is, Because Mr. *Currie* in his *Vind.* p. 189. alledges, I have dealt unfairly in the said Quotation; and, in his boasting Manner, "He defies Mr. *Wilson* or his Brethren to instance any Thing like this, in any Quotation of his from first to last in the *Essay*." Sure the Reader may think, that I have set my Thumb upon some weighty and strong Argument that Mr. *Durham's* Words afford against the *Associate Presbytery*: What are the Words then which I have omitted? They are even the following, and so do not necessitate Separation from such a Church or any Ordinance thereof. Here then, according to Mr. *Currie*, is a strong Argument from Mr. *Durham* against our Secession, viz. Faults in some Members, and Defects in Ministers and Officers in executing Discipline, do not pollute the Ordinances in themselves, or unto others; and therefore do not necessitate Separation from a true Church. I grant the whole; and after Mr. *Currie* has got the Words which I omitted, and which he lays so much Stress and Weight upon, What has he gained? 'Tis still evident and plain, that Mr. *Durham* is speaking against Separation from a true Church; which proceeds upon this Principle, That the Faults and Defects mentioned pollute the Ordinances in themselves or to others. Mr. *Currie* owns that some other Words that I cite from Mr. *Durham* prove indeed, that he speaks against the above Principle of the Sectarians; but still he applies Mr. *Durham's* Reasonings, against the Seceding Brethren; and to instruct the Justice of the Allegation, and my unfair Dealing with Mr. *Durham*, he desires the Reader may compare the 194th Page of the *Defence* with the two last Leaves of Mr. *Durham's* Commentaries upon the second Chapter of the *Revelation*. And I likewise join with Mr. *Currie*, in desiring the Reader to make the Comparison betwixt the Places mentioned, and let him judge for himself of the Justice or Unjustice of Mr. *Currie's* Reasonings, and of the Charge of unfair Dealing that he has laid against me.

Since Mr. *Currie* has challenged me, and the Brethren whom he names, to instance any Thing like the above, which he calls an unfair Quotation, in all his *Essay* from first to last; I answer, I have given frequent Instances of his curtailling Authors whom he cites, and of his leaving out such Sentences as are necessary to give us their true Sense and

Meaning. As for Instance, when he quotes the Act of Assembly 1638, which he represents as a tyrannical Act, and which is one of his common-place Arguments in his *Essay*, he scarce gives us the one Half of it; he still leaves out that Part of the Act which contains the Reasons of the same, and consequently that Part of the Act which gives us the genuine Sense and Meaning of the *Assembly*: And I reckon that an Author is unfairly quoted, when any of his Words are omitted, which give us his just and true Meaning. I give another Instance of this likewise, *Def.* p. 193. where I take Notice of a long Quotation that the *Essay* gives us from Mr. *Rutherford*; and then I observe, that Mr. *Currie* sets his Thumb upon the Conclusion of the said Quotation, which is laid in the following Terms: "Then 'tis unlawful
 " to separate from the true Worship of God, because a
 " Church is not constitute of visible Saints, and a People
 " all taught of God." Whence I observe, that Mr. *Rutherford's* Testimony is directed against those that plead, that positive Signs of Conversion and Regeneration are necessary Qualifications of Church-members; and consequently, that the Seceding Ministers have no Concern in this Testimony, that Mr. *Currie* alledges against them from Mr. *Rutherford*. And I likewise reckon it very unjust and unfair, when Mr. *Currie* conceals the above Conclusion which Mr. *Rutherford* gives to his Argument. But says Mr. *Currie*, *Vind.* p. 188. "It was not necessary to give the above Words." And why? says Mr. *Currie*, Because he cited Mr. *Rutherford* only to prove, that for all the Faults that were instanced by the Apostle in the Church of *Corinth*, yet the Apostle was against Separation from that Church, and, instead of that, commands them to meet together; which, says Mr. *Currie*, "is a Demonstration, that such Faults as were in that
 " Church are not Ground of Separation from any Church
 " of Christ." But, does not Mr. *Rutherford* give the several particular Instances of the Faults in that Church, to prove that 'tis unlawful to separate from the true Worship of God, because a Church is not constitute of visible Saints? And Mr. *Currie* may know that this is not a Point in question betwixt him and me. Mr. *Currie* adds, "As Mr. *Rutherford*
 " in his Writings pleads against positive Signs of Re-
 " generation being requisite Qualifications of Church-mem-
 " bers, so he pleads against Separation from a Church of
 " Christ, tho' her Faults should be many." What then? Even so say I: Tho' there be many personal Faults and Defects in Church-members, both Office-bearers and others,

this doth not warrant Separation from a *true Church* of Christ. But unless Mr. *Currie* can instruct that *Rutherford, Durham, Gillespie*, and the other great Divines he names, plead for Ecclesiastical Union and Conjunction with a *particular visible Church*, when she is carrying on, in her *Ecclesiastical Capacity*, a complex Course of Defection from Reformation-principles once attained unto, and this notwithstanding of the ordinary Means used to reclaim them; as also, that, in this Case, these that desire to confess, own and acknowledge the *Principles* mentioned, tho' the *lesser* Part by far, may not depart from Union and Conjunction with the *Majority*, and, as a separate and *distinct Body* by themselves, make *publick Confession* of their received Principles, in Opposition to the Injuries done to the same; unless, I say, Mr. *Currie* can instruct that the several eminent Divines he mentions have pled and asserted as above, he may spare all his Labour, his numerous Quotations are all to no Purpose, they never touch the Cause or Question as 'tis stated betwixt the *Associate Presbytery* and the present Judicatories. The above Instances from Masters *Durham* and *Rutherford* are two, amongst the rest, that I consider in the *Defence*. Whereas Mr. *Currie* complains of my Neglect of many other Authorities he has advanced in his *Essay*, I shall therefore give one Instance of such Neglect; and the Instance that I give is one that Mr. *Currie* seems to be most warm upon, as if I had neglected one of his most material Testimonies against the Seceding Brethren: It is a Quotation from the *Helvetican Confession*, and it runs thus, *Essay*, p. 49. "We esteem so highly of
 " Communion with the true Church of Christ, that we deny
 " they can live before God, who do not communicate with
 " the true Church of God, but separate themselves from
 " it. As without the Ark of *Noah* there was no Salvation,
 " but the World perished in the Deluge; so we believe,
 " that without Christ, who offers himself to be received in
 " the Church, there is no certain Salvation; and therefore
 " we teach, that they who would live, they ought not to
 " separate from a true Church of Christ." Mr. *Currie* in his *Vindication*, p. 4. Marg. Note, tells his Reader, The above Authority "Mr. *Wilson* thought so hot, that he durst not
 " touch it." He likewise concludes from the above Testimony, "That 'tis evident to a Demonstration, that the
 " Seceding Brethren act in direct Opposition to Reformation-principles, and to the Principles of the Reformed
 " Churches." If what Mr. *Currie* says is *evidant to a Demonstration*, then to be sure the above Words of the *Hel-*

Helvetian Confession contain some very plain and evident Argument against the Seceding Ministers. And, since I must answer to the Arguments that are contained in the Authors that Mr. Currie brings against us, I must consider how the Argument must be laid from the above Quotation: And, if I do not mistake, it runs thus: They cannot live before God, who do not communicate with the true Church of God, but separate themselves from it: But the Church of *Scotland*, as she is represented in her present Judicatories, is a true Church of God; therefore they cannot live before God who separate from the present Judicatories. The Reason of the first Proposition is, As all perished who were without the Ark of *Noah*, so all must perish eternally who make a Secession from what Mr. Currie reckons a true Church. Mr. Currie's Quotation must be applied in the Manner above-express'd, if it have any Significancy at all in the present Question: And, if the above Words of the *Helvetian* Confession must be applied this Way, I confess the Argument is too hot for me; at this Rate, not only the Seceding Ministers, but all in *Scotland* who do not join in Communion with the present *established Church*, are all shut up in a perishing State; they are in the same hopeless and desperate Estate with the Damned in Hell, unless they return to Communion with the *established Church*. But the Words of the above Confession are not so very hot, but that I dare touch them without Prejudice and Hurt; and if their Sense were not perverted, and if Mr. Currie were not guilty of taking from the Words of that Confession, they would be found to contain a very great Truth, and not the least Shadow of an Argument against the Seceding Ministers. The *Church*, concerning which the *Helvetian* Confession speaks, is not any particular visible Church, but the Catholick Church; this is the *Church* which is there compared to the *Ark of Noah*: Even according to Mr. Currie's Translation of the Word's, "So we believe, " that without Christ, who offers himself to be received in " the *Church*, there is no certain Salvation," they must be applied to the *Church Catholick*; for this is what is common to the whole Catholick Church, and not peculiar to any particular visible Church. This will yet further appear from the Words as they run in the *Latin Syntagma*, which are, *Ita credimus extra Christum, qui se Electis in Ecclesia fruendum prabet, nullam esse salutem certam: i. e.* "So we " believe that without Christ, who gives himself to be enjoyed by the Elect in the Church, there is no certain

" Salvation." It is plain, that, in the above Words, the *Confession* speaks not of the general Offer of Christ which is common to all in the Church, as Mr. Currie by his Translation would have it; but of the giving of Christ to the Elect in the Church in actual Possession and Enjoyment, which cannot be restricted to any particular Church, but must be applied to the *Catholic Church*. And, tho' the Words of the *Helvetican Confession* should be understood according to Mr. Currie's curtailed Translation, they only import, that out of the *Catholic Church*, where Christ is offered, there is no ordinary Possibility of Salvation; which is likewise the Doctrine, of our *Westminster Confession*, Chap. 25. Art. 2. And, from the Whole, it is so far from being evident to a Demonstration (as Mr. Currie writes) that our Secession is contrary to the Principles of the Reformed Churches, that it is most agreeable to them; in regard our Secession from the present Judicatories is not from the *Catholic Church*, nor from the Faith of the *Catholic Church*; as also, in regard our Secession is founded upon a Confession of such Principles as are confessed by the Reformed Churches in their several *Confessions*.

I judge it needless to pursue Mr. Currie further in his Argument taken from Authorities, since I find no more Weight in any of them than in these I have mentioned: I shall therefore close this Head with one Observation more, viz. When Mr. Currie finds our Reformed Divines condemning Separation from *true Churches*, he presently concludes that all their Arguments may be applied against the Seceding Ministers: But, in this, he still begs what is in question; for I have still refused, and do refuse for the many weighty Reasons and Arguments I have advanced in the *Defence*, that this National Church, as she is represented in her present Judicatories, is a *true Church*. I have granted, *Def. p. 41*. That if *true Church* is taken in a large Sense, viz. for these Things that are reckoned essential to the Being of a Church, or for a Church which holds, by visible Profession, the Essentials or most of the Essentials of Christianity; then and in this Respect this established Church is a true Church: And so is the Church of *England*, and so are many of the most degenerate and corrupt Churches that profess the Christian Name. And if Mr. Currie will believe Mr. Rutherford in his *Peaceable Plea*, Chap. 10. the Church of *Rome* is in some Respect essentially a Church, and a true Church. But if *true Church* is taken for a Church that has the Notes and Characters of a true Church given in our first Confession of

Faith, in the *Helvetican* and other Confessions of the Reformed Churches; then I refuse that this National Church, as represented in her present Judicatories, is a *true Church*: She has no Claim to these Characters; she has forfeited them all, less or more, by her lamentable Degeneracy and Backsliding from the Lord. When our Divines then condemn Separation from *true Churches*, they understand, according to our Reformed Confessions, *Churches* that profess, maintain and defend the true Doctrine and the true Faith; Churches where Ecclesiastical Discipline is uprightly administered as God's Word prescribes, and where the Sacraments are administered by such as are lawfully called by the Head and Lord of the House to feed the Sheep of his Pasture. When Mr. Currie tells his Readers, that Mr. Durban, &c. teach that our Lord Jesus is no Approver or Countenancer of Separation from a *true Church*, it is certainly a great Truth: But, as it is applied by Mr. Currie, it is, as he himself frequently speaks, a mere Blind and Fallacy; he blindfolds his Reader thereby, when he would have him to believe that this National Church, as she is represented in her present Judicatories, is a *true Church*. As I have proven the contrary, so I am afterwards to shew that Mr. Currie has not entred into the Argument: And therefore Mr. Currie, if he pleases, may bring an Hundred Authorities from great Men, condemning Separation from a *true Church*; but I cannot look upon any of them as militating against the Associate Presbytery, till Mr. Currie give more satisfying Proofs, than he has given as yet, that the present Judicatories have a just Claim to the Scripture-characters of a *true Church*, held forth from the Word of God in the *Confessions* of the Reformed Churches. Therefore

I proceed to consider some of the grievous Charges that Mr. Currie brings against the *Defence*. And the first that I notice is that of *Untruths*, or direct and manifest *Untruths*: And I shall give the Reader an Instance in two or three of them, and in the same Order in which they ly in the *Vindication*.

The first *Untruth* I am charged with, is upon the following Words of my *Preface* to the *Defence*, p. 6. "I have not observed that Mr. Currie undertakes to justify expressly any of the Steps of Defection, whether in former or present Times, that are condemned by the *Presbytery* in their *Judicial Act and Testimony*; only, he alledges as to some few of them, that they are controverted Points, and therefore, according to him, not fit Matter for a *Testimony*."

The

The same Thing upon the Matter is repeated, *Def.* p. 138. Upon the above Words, Mr. *Currie* in his Preface to his *Vindication*, p. 4. reflects in the following Manner; " 'Tis probable, that, by these Expressions, Mr. *Wilson* would have the World believe I could not refuse that he and the other Brethren have had some Ground for all they lay to the Charge of the Church of *Scotland* in their *Testimony* and other Writings. But this, says he, is an *Untruth*, &c." I own, that I always thought that Mr. *Currie* acknowledged that we had *some Ground* at least for all we lay to the Charge of the present Judicatories, particularly in our *Judicial Act and Testimony*; especially when I considered, that Mr. *Currie* professeth he would be glad to see a Warning against the Errors and blasphemous Heresies vented among us, *Essay*, p. 174. as also his refusing to justify the Acts against the protesting Ministers and the Presbytery of *Dunfermline*, and his declaring his Sorrow for them; his owning that the Church of *Scotland* may be worse now than formerly, and that she may be on the *Decline*, *Essay*, p. 59, 28, 182. These, and the like Things, made me think that he would not refuse that the Seceding Ministers had *some Ground* for all that they lay to the Charge of the present Judicatories. And tho', for these Reasons, I cannot admit of the Justice of the Charge that he brings against me, viz. of writing an *Untruth*; yet, if Mr. *Currie* will have it to be an *Untruth*, that he does not expressly justify any of the Steps of *Defection* either in former or present Times which are condemned by the Presbytery in their *Judicial Act and Testimony*, I have indeed been mistaken in the charitable Sentiments that I entertain'd concerning him, which his above Declarations and Professions led me into: And if Mr. *Currie* will have it to be so, tho' I am sorry it should be so, then let him be held and repute as one who justifies absolutely and expressly the several Steps of *Defection* in the present Judicatories, except their Conduct in the Settlement of Ministers, which is the only Exception he makes. But we shall see by and by, that he clears them of *Defection* in this Particular also.

I must observe, that there is one Thing Mr. *Currie* does not advert unto, and which 'tis probable has led him into Mistakes, both in that Part of his *Vindication* I am now upon, as also in other Parts of his *Essay* and *Vindication*, viz. That the Seceding Ministers take a two-fold View, in their Writings, of the Sins and Backslidings of this Church and Land, 1st, The Sins and Backslidings of this National Church are considered as they are Grounds of *Secession*: Thus they are viewed

viewed in the *first Testimony* emitted by them. Again, The Sins and Backslidings of this Church and whole Land are considered as they are Grounds of Mourning, and Causes of the Lord's righteous Quarrel and Displeasure: Thus they are, viewed in the *second Testimony*, called the *Judicial Act and Testimony*. Tho' many of the Sins mentioned in the said *Act and Testimony* are the Grounds of our Secession, and considered as such in our *first Testimony*; and tho' I have viewed them as such in the *Defence*, and drawn such Inferences and Conclusions from them as I thought just and native; yet, in all the *Judicial Act and Testimony*, there is not one Word of *Secession*, except in the *Introduction*, which the Reader may see is not a *judicial Act* or Deed, neither is it conceived in any such Terms. Likewise, the Evils and Sins mentioned are not in the said *Act* considered as Grounds of Secession; and the Reason is plain, 'Tis not intended in the *Act and Testimony* to state the Grounds of Secession, but to lay down the Causes and Grounds of the Lord's Anger and Controversy: The former was done in the *first Testimony*, and the latter is done in the *Judicial Act and Testimony*; wherein likewise all Ranks of Persons are called to humble themselves before the Lord for the Sins and Evils therein-mentioned. And however Mr. Currie may look upon some Things, which the Presbytery have found Causes of Mourning, as controverted Points; and altho' he may refuse to give his own private Judgment about others of them; yet, if he absolutely and expressly justifies any of the Sins, Backslidings and Steps of Defection, as they are laid in the Presbytery's *Act and Testimony*, I am not afraid to say, He does what he can to harden the present Generation in their Transgression and Iniquity.

A second *Untruth*, wherewith Mr. Currie charges me, is upon these Words, *Defence*, Pref. p. 5. "Through the whole of his Book he ranks the Associate Ministers amongst the most rigid Separatists, he joins them with the grossest Sectarians." Mr. Currie in his *Vindication*, p. 12. says, "This is a *Slander* and *Untruth*, and groundless Charge." But, has he not charged them with doing what they can to rend and ruine the Church of Scotland? Has he not brought Masters Durham, Rutherford and Gillespie, in their Reasonings against the Sectarians, against us, as if our Principles and theirs were the same? But says Mr. Currie, "The gross Sectarians held many damnable Errors, and uttered many dreadful Blasphemies; whereas, says he, in all my *Essay*, I have never charged the Brethren with any

" Thing

"Thing of that Nature." I scarce think that we are much obliged to Mr. Currie for his Compliment: If he has not charged us with the Blasphemy of the *Sectarians*, he has put us in the same damnable State with the worst of them; since, according to his Argument drawn from the *Helvetican Confession* against us, as I have already observ'd, we cannot live before God, unless we *return* unto the Communion of the present established Church: And, in so far, he joins us with the grossest Blasphemers that ever breath'd upon the Face of the Earth, unless it be such as have sinned the unpardonable Sin.

A third *Untruth* he charges me with, is upon my following Words, *Defence*, Pref. p. 8. "The most Part of Mr. Currie's Quotations are applied in a Manner contrary to the Intention and Design of the worthy Authors out of which they are taken, if the Connection of the Purposes which they treat is duly considered. I also affirm, that I have frequently brought some of Mr. Currie's learned and great Men against himself." Whereupon Mr. Currie in his *Vindication*, p. 19. affirms, *That these are manifest Untruths and Slanders*. As for the first of these manifest Untruths, viz. his applying Quotations of great Men in a Manner contrary to their Intention and Design; I appeal to the Instances I have given above, viz. *Durham*, *Rutherford*, the *Helvetic Confession*, and all the other Instances I have given in my *Defence*. As for the second, which he calls a manifest Untruth and Slander, viz. "That I have brought some of his great Authors against himself;" To clear myself of this unjust Accusation, I shall take notice of some of the Ways and Means that Mr. Currie takes to evade the Force of their Testimony when I bring them against him. One Way that he takes is, to slip them over, or to pass them (as he speaks) in deep Silence. As for Instance, when I bring an Argument against him, *Def.* p. 50, 193. from Mr. *Durham* on *Scandal*; tho' Mr. Currie pretends to follow me Foot for Foot, yet I conceive he saw the Argument so pointed against him, that he judged proper to pass it over. Another Way that Mr. Currie thinks fit to take, to evade the Testimonies of some of his own great Men against himself; he alledges, 'Tis not easy to tell what is their Meaning, as *Vind.* p. 63. upon a Quotation I bring against him from Mr. *Sheills*: Or, that their Words want to be explained; as *Vind.* p. 69. in a Quotation I bring against him from Mr. *Claud*. Tho' I humbly judge, I had given (*Def.* p. 62.) the obvious Sense and Meaning of Mr. *Claud's* Words; yet

Mr. Currie, instead of noticing what I say, and the Argument I draw from Mr. *Claud*, tells us, That that Divine has not a Word explaining what he means by the Words quoted; and yet they are very plain in themselves, and need no Explanation. There is a third Way that Mr. Currie takes to evade the Authorities foresaid, and that is, he claims to himself the sole Right of quoting them: Therefore, when, *Def.* p. 52. I say, "Our Author thinks fit to cite Doctor *Owen*, I hope he shall not refuse me the same Liberty;" Unto this Mr. Currie replies, *Vind.* p. 57. "But our Brother may know, that altho' I may cite Masters *Ebenezer* or *Ralph Erskines*, Mr. *Wilson* or Mr. *Moncrieff* against himself, he may not have the same Liberty." I do not plead for Liberty to cite any of Mr. Currie's Authors against myself, I have not the least Occasion for it: But I plead for Liberty to cite Doctor *Owen* or any other Author against Mr. Currie, if I find their Arguments support the Cause of Truth, which I endeavour to defend; and I know no peculiar Claim that Mr. Currie has to cite Doctor *Owen* or any other. As for Masters *Erskines*, &c. I do not remember that I have made use of their Authority, except in a Reference I make to our *first Testimony*, *Def.* p. 40. I likewise make use of the Paper intituled *Reasons of Not-accession*, *Def.* p. 112. where I lay their Argument before Mr. Currie, to evince that the Sentences of the Assembly 1733 were neither materially nor formally repealed by the Assembly 1734, nor by what was done by the Synod of *Perth* in consequence of the Deed of the said Assembly. And, when Mr. Currie comes to that Part of my *Defence*, he passeth it over in deep Silence; he very well knew that it was unanswerable. As for Doctor *Owen*, I have sometimes made use of his Testimony; but Mr. Currie excepts against any Testimony I can bring from him: Why? "Because, in Matters of Discipline and Government, his Sentiments are of less Consideration with *Presbyterians*;" And therefore, in the Business of Separation from a Church, his Authority is of lesser Weight, *Vind.* p. 17, 54, 57. This is Mr. Currie's Answer to all the Quotations I give him from that eminent Divine. To which I reply, That, if I have made use of the Doctor's Testimony, in any of his peculiar Principles, wherein he differs from *Presbyterian* Divines; then his Authority may be esteemed of lesser Weight: But this I refuse; and I affirm, that I have made use of the Doctor's Testimony, with his Arguments supporting his Opinions, only in such Things wherein he agrees with our *Presbyterian* and other

Reformed Divines ; and, if Mr. *Currie* could have given an Instance to the contrary, he would readily have done it. I shall not pursue our Author any further in the Charge of Untruths that he lays against me : I shall leave it to the Reader to examine them, and to compare them with my *Defence* ; and, if he judge impartially, I hope he will find them altogether as groundless as these I have noticed. I shall only further observe, That when I have charged Mr. *Currie* with reporting several Things that are neither Truth nor Matter of Fact, under the charitable Construction above-mentioned, Mr. *Currie* answers to some of the particular Instances, by telling his Reader, 'Tis a *transient Word*, *Vind.* p. 199, 216. and an *undesigned Mistake*, *Vind.* p. 319. Mr. *Currie* pleads for Charity, he commends it, and would have all Men exercise it towards himself, *Vind.* p. 6, 11. but he discovers very little of a Disposition to exercise it towards his Antagonist, especially when he finds his beloved and dear *Self* touched.

I proceed to another Charge he brings against me, and that is of uncharitable *Heart-judgings*, *Vind.* p. 10. "Of all the Authors I have seen, says he, none are more guilty of groundless uncharitable Heart-judgings, than our Author in his *Defence*." For my Part, I thought I gave as little Ground for this, as for any of the groundless Charges and Accusations he brings against me. In my Preface, p. 10. after one of his Appeals to Heaven about the Design of his Writing with Reference to our Reformation-period, I tell my Reader, "After such a solemn Appeal to Heaven, I shall judge charitably of our Author's Intentions and Designs ; He to whom the Appeal is made, can only penetrate into them : But then I must be allowed to say, that the *Tendency* and *Design* of what he writes upon this Head is to weaken all the Arguments drawn from that Period for the Purity of our Reformation." But I shall examine one of the Instances he alledges of my uncharitable Heart-judgings, and 'tis one upon which he makes the greatest Noise, and expresseth himself with the greatest Vehemency : The Occasion whereof is this ; Mr. *Currie* having asserted in his *Essay*, That a Stop, yea, a considerable Stop, has been put to violent Intrusions for sometime bygone, *Essay*, p. 30. I give my Reasons against his confident Assertion, in several Instances, *Def.* p. 160, 161. and I conclude them after this Manner ; "Does Mr. *Currie* think, with his fair and smooth Words, to put out the Eyes of Men ? 'Tis indeed to be regreted, that the most Part are so obsti-

"stinately blind, that they will not see the Grounds and
 "Causes of the Lord's Controversy against us; and our Au-
 "thor's Reasonings have a manifest Tendency to cherish them
 "in their wilful Blindness and Darkeness." Upon my above
 Words Mr. *Currie* reflects in the following Manner, *Vind.* p.
 162. "Here again, with a Witness, Mr. *Wilson* takes what he
 "calls a Jump into the Conscience, mounting the Throne of
 "God, in judging not only the Author of the *Essay*, but the
 "Generality of such as will not trample upon the Light of
 "their own Consciences, and go out to the Brethren; for he
 "charges them with being not only blind, but wilfully blind.
 "When People are thus daring and bold as to judge Mens
 "Hearts, I am sure they go contrary to the Royal Command
 "of *Zion's King*, &c." To all which I reply, That, in
 my above Words, I neither judge Mr. *Currie*, nor any that
 have not Clearness to go out to the Brethren; but I speak
 indefinitely of the *Grounds* and *Causes* of the Lord's Contro-
 versy against us; and I affirm, that the most Part are so ob-
 stinately and wilfully blind, that they will not see them: And
 I have good Ground and Reason to say so, in regard the
 Majesty of God has given such sufficient Means of Light,
 whereby all and every one in *Scotland* may see and know the
 Grounds and Causes of the Lord's righteous Quarrel and
 Controversy; and therefore the Blindness of such as do not
 see them, is a culpable Blindness, and consequently a wilful
 and obstinate Blindness. I am likewise warranted, from our
 Lord's express Words, to express myself in the above Man-
 ner, *John* 3. 19. *And this is the Condemnation, that Light is*
come into the World, and Men loved Darkeness rather than Light,
because their Deeds were evil. Have I not too much Ground
 to say, that this is *Scotland's* Condemnation, that Light is
 come unto them, whereby they may know and understand
 the Causes and Grounds of the Lord's Controversy against
 us, but the most Part have chosen *Darkness*, i. e. they are
 obstinately and wilfully blind? Wherefore I have good Rea-
 son to conclude, that Mr. *Currie* is too daring and bold, when,
 in Face of the above express Scripture-warrant, he arraigns
 me of mounting the Throne of God, and going contrary to
 the Royal Command of the King of *Zion*. And, however
 Mr. *Currie* may palliate the Matter, I cannot excuse his fol-
 lowing Words from a Sneer; "Mr. *Wilson* has said, obsti-
 "nately and wilfully blind; and it is a Wonder he has not
 "said, judicially blind; He speaks as if Conscience in all
 "but the Brethren and their Followers were cauterized.
 "What is become of that Clarity which thinketh no Evil?"

If Mr. Currie, in his *sneering* Manner, thinks it a *Wonder* that I have not said, *judicially blind*; I tell him, that I might upon very just Grounds have said so: And what I said not then, I say it now, That 'tis to be regreted, that the most Part of this Generation are *judicially blind*; and 'tis both their Sin and Judgment, that they do not see the Grounds and Causes of the Lord's Controversy against us. I fear that that Word of the Lord has its Accomplishment amongst us, *Isa. 29. 9. Stay yourselves and wonder, cry ye out, and cry: They are drunken, but not with Wine; they stagger, but not with strong Drink. For the Lord hath poured out upon you the Spirit of deep Sleep, and hath closed your Eyes: The Prophets and your Rulers, the Seers hath he covered. Tho' I doubt not but some, both Ministers and People, see, and are more affected with the Grounds and Causes of the Lord's Controversy, than any Thing I can pretend unto; yet Mr. Currie gives me Ground to say, That he himself is too daring and bold, when upon the Matter he affirms, in the Face of the most lamentable Evidences to the contrary, that the most Part of this Generation are not under a judicial Blindness. And I humbly judge that I do not mount the Throne of God, when I say, That he is doing what he can, by his above Manner of expressing himself, to harden the present Generation in their Sin; whereby they are ripened more and more for some awful and terrible Judgment. As for his remaining Words above-quoted, I am sorry to add, That they appear to me to favour so much of the Dialect of profane Mockers, and of such who boast of what they call *universal Charity*, that they are very indecent in any, but especially in one of his Profession and Character. I shall only add, upon the Charge that he lays against me of entring into the Consciences of Men, That this is what Mr. Currie is guilty of in several Places of his *Vindication*, as p. 203. he charges me as loving to quarrel for *Quarrelling's Sake*, and loving to slander. And in the same Place, tho' he owns I declare my Sorrow that I have Ground for the Accusations I lay against him, yet he affirms, *It seems I would have been heartily glad to have wherewith to accuse him.* And, p. 293. he says, "It seems to be one great End of Mr. Wilson's Defence, a Design to Slander." The above Expressions are more like penetrating into the Conscience, than any Thing he can bring against me from my Defence.*

Another Charge that Mr. Currie brings against me is that of Inconsistencies; I shall give the Reader one Instance of such Inconsistencies as I am charged with, I may afterwards

take Notice of some others. The Instance I here give is, *Vind.* p. 27. where, says he, Mr. Wilson speaks of Mr. Currie's fair and smooth Language in the *Essay*; "But in this, says he, Mr. Wilson contradicts himself." But how? In the Postscript to his Letter he says, "He was sorry for that bitter Spirit which he saw breathing through the whole *Essay*." Then Mr. Currie adds, "What, is the *Essay* written with fair and smooth Language, and yet with a Spirit of Bitterness thro' the whole of it?" Unto his Question I answer, That Man's Words may be fair and smooth Language, when yet they are full of Bitterness of Spirit, *Psal.* 55. 21. *The Words of his Mouth were smoother than Butter, but War was in his Heart: His Words were softer than Oil, yet were they drawn Swords.* And, if this Instance will not convince Mr. Currie that there is no Self-contradiction in my above Manner of expressing myself, let him call to Remembrance *Joab*, who said to *Amasa*, *Art thou in Health, my Brother?* 2 Sam. 20. 9.

As for Inconsistencies, I have too much Ground and Reason to lay this Charge against Mr. Currie himself. I will have Occasion afterwards to take Notice of severals of them; I shall only in this Place give one Instance, viz. *Vind.* p. 74. he says, "But for the Church of Scotland's going on in a Course of Defection, tho' we seem not to be going forward, this is what I refuse; except as to some Settlements of Ministers contrary to the Inclinations of the People." And yet, in the following Page 75. he says, "Glory be to God, neither the greatest Part, nor any Part I know of in this Church, have made any visible Defection from the Truth, by professing Error." Does not Mr. Currie know that the Judicatories of this Church intrude Ministers? Has he not acknowledged in his above Words that this is a Step of Defection? And do not the Judicatories justify their Intrusions? If 'tis an Error, do they then not profess an Error? And, if 'tis not an Error, why does Mr. Currie condemn it? 'Tis indeed but rare that Mr. Currie calls *Intrusions* by the Name of *Defections*: He owns they are *bad Things*; he says, he *condemns* them, and that they are Things he will never *approve* of. Yet I doubt if, in all these large Professions that he makes, he is consistent with himself; in regard I find him writing after this Manner, *Vind.* p. 113. "I humbly think the Heritors Man, *cateris paribus*, or when as well qualified as others, is to be preferred, for the Good and Peace of the Congregation, and the comfortable Settlement of the Place." And this is the Answer that Mr.

Currie

Currie gives me upon the following Question which I put, Def. p. 107. upon the Occasion of the Severities some Heritors have used against their Tenants, because of their refusing to go in to the Man whom the Heritors have called to be their Minister. The Question I put is; Do not the Judicatories support and encourage such Persecution, when they take the Heritors Man by the Hand, and thrust him in upon a dissenting and reclaiming People? To this Question Mr. Currie answers in the Words above-quoted. And what he affirms concerning the Preference that's to be given to the Heritors Man, is what the *modest Enquirer* and all his intruding Associates have pled in their own Defence, namely, That the People should stoop to the Heritors Man, for the Good and Peace of the Congregation, and the comfortable Settlement thereof; especially when he is as well qualified as any other that may be in Competition with him. And who must be Judges in this Case? Either the Heritors, or the Presbytery: What is then left unto the People, but to stoop to the Heritors, and bow to the Presbytery? After this, Mr. Currie ought to tell to the World plainly, that he gives up with his *Jus divinum populi*, and his *Vindication* of the Peoples Right.

There is another Way of arguing, which I humbly judge is peculiar to Mr. Currie himself; and that is, by *personal Reflections*, *private Stories*, and *Hearsays*. When he is brought to any Pinch or Strait, he diverts into personal Reflections; as, *Vind.* p. 39, 40, 84, 96, &c. Again, if the Argument straitens him, he is sure to fetch a Blow, by some private Story or Hearsay; as, *Vind.* p. 47, 327. I told Mr. Currie in the Conclusion of my Defence, That, if I should dip into his private Stories and Hearsays, it would issue in a flat Contradiction unto most, if not all, of them; and, after all, that the Cause in question would get no Advantage upon either Side. From what Principle Mr. Currie is moved, in reporting unto the World, in his Writings, what this or the other Body whispers into his Ears, I shall not take it upon me to determine; But I will venture to say, It is below a Man, and much more a Divine, to manage the Cause after this Manner which he undertakes to defend.

Tho' I have hitherto neglected Mr. Currie's Stories as they ly in his *Essay*, yet I judge it necessary to consider two of them which I find in his *Vindication*; because one of them concerns a Reverend Member of the *Associate Presbytery*, and the other concerns myself. The first I mention is in his *Vindication*, p. 47. upon the following Question which

which I propose unto him, viz. "Can he give the right Hand of Fellowship, by a Conjunction in Ecclesiastical Judicatories with *Intruders*, *Arminians*, *Avians*, or even with such as refuse to display the Banner of a Testimony against such Corrupters and their Corruptions, and after all say he is pure?" Unto which Mr. Currie makes Answer, "The Eight Seceding Brethren are not all free from this Guilt, viz. of being *Intruders*: And (*says he*) 'tis well known, neither Mr. *Ebenezer Erskine* nor I had Freedom to join in the Ordination of one of their Number, upon this very Account, viz. his *Intrusion*." And he adds, "That Member hath never made any publick Confession, nor, for ought I have heard, any Profession of Repentance in private, for that Sin in himself, however much Zeal he may pretend against it in others." Here is a Story laid with Abundance of Ill-nature, and in a Manner which has an evident Tendency to give a deep Wound to the *Presbytery's* Conduct, and to a particular Brother's Character; wherein likewise he judgeth his Brother's Heart, when, upon the Matter, he reckons the Zeal he has discovered against *Intrusions* a *pretended* Zeal: And, after all, he is not so ingenuous as to tell his Reader whom he intends. 'Tis a frequent Practice with him, to wrap up his Stories under such cloudy Expressions. In like Manner, upon a Question I propose unto him, viz. Whether *Intruders*, whom Mr. Currie calls *impious Robbers*, deserve that the Censures of the House of God be inflicted upon them? he answers, *Vind.* p. 114. "Let the *Associate Presbytery*, if of this Mind, cast out the *Beam* out of their own Eye." Here again he leaves us in the dark whom he intends. When I come forward to *Vind.* p. 125. upon the Question betwixt him and me, If *Intruders* are to be held as lawful and sent Ministers of Christ? he answers, "I think the Minister of *B——d*, who is now a Member of the *Associate Presbytery*, is to be held a lawful and sent Minister of Christ, tho' he had not the Call of that Congregation when settled among them." The Story is again reported in the same Manner, p. 193. By the two Letters *B——d* must needs be understood the Minister of *Burntisland*, since they agree to no other Minister of the *Associate Presbytery*. The Story then comes out thus: The Reverend Mr. *Thomson* Minister of *Burntisland* was intruded upon that Parish, and had not the Call of that Congregation when settled amongst them; and that 'tis well known, neither Mr. *Ebenezer Erskine* nor Mr. *Currie* had Freedom to join in Mr. *Thomson's* Ordination upon this very Account.

As for what concerns Mr. *Thomson's* Call to *Burntisland*, and likewise, as for what Mr. *Currie* affirms, is well known concerning himself and Mr. *Erskine*, I leave the Reader to the Account that the Reverend Mr. *Thomson* gives in the following Missive directed to me.

R. D. B.

“ **M** R. *Currie*, in his Review of your *Defence of the Reformation-Principles of the Church of Scotland*, having frequently made mention of my Settlement as an Intrusion, and violent Settlement; I think it my Duty to give you a short Account of it.

“ At the Moderation, there were two Calls, one to Mr. *T. K.* Probationer, another to me; and they stood thus: The Callers of Mr. *K.* were One Elder, a few Heritors, with the greater Number of the People; and this was brought about by a Gentleman in Mr. *Currie's* Parish of *Jacobite* Principles, having some Lands in this Parish, who, before the Moderation, came to this Place, and, by his Activity among these of his own Principles, got a great many of those who frequented the Meeting-house to join with him, who otherwise would not have concerned themselves in the Call of a *Presbyterian* Minister. At the Time when the two Calls were upon the Field, there was an *Episcopal* Meeting-house in this Place, which was frequented by many of the Congregation; and these were the Persons that the foresaid Gentleman had Influence upon. And Mr. *Currie* may allow me to know what they were that joined in this Call: Many of them were very little to be regarded in calling of a Minister; for they could not have been allowed to go to the Table of the Lord, and so not to be regarded in the calling of a Minister, according to what Mr. *Currie* has laid down as a Principle. My Callers were all the Elders except One, who soon after came in to the Session, and continues still in it, the greatest Part of the Heritors, but the lesser Number of the People; and the Reason of this was, Because the most Part of my Callers were those who had not join'd with the *Episcopal* Meeting-house, where the *English* Service was, and so could not be but the lesser Number, seeing so many at that Time did go to the Meeting-house. Mr. *Currie* cannot but know in what Situation this Place was then in, and how these that professed *Presbyterian* Principles were opposed and run down. There was no

" *Presentation* in the Case, tho' this has been given out by
 " some.

" When the Calls came before the Presbytery, the Call
 " given to me was sustained and preferred, and no Dissent,
 " no Protest taken, nor Appeal made by any within the
 " Congregation, but all fell in with it; and, when I was or-
 " dained, nothing but Harmony, and all seemed to be sa-
 " tisfied. When these Things are considered, I cannot see
 " how my Settlement can be called an Intrusion; for I al-
 " ways took an Intrusion to be, when one is thrust in upon
 " a dissenting and reclaiming Congregation, which was not
 " in my Case. I may ask Mr. *Currie*, By whom my Settle-
 " ment was reckoned an Intrusion and violent Settlement?
 " Not by the Presbytery, or any other Church-judicatory;
 " not by my Congregation, who never did reckon it to be
 " an Intrusion, nor do reckon it so to this Day: And I do
 " not see how a Settlement can be an Intrusion, where none
 " within the Congregation did or do look upon it as such.
 " Not by Mr. *Currie*, otherwise he would have signified so
 " much to me, and should have done it, according to what
 " we have recorded, *Lev. 19. 17.* But, instead of this, he
 " came to *Burntisland*, and lodged with me a Night, not
 " long after my Ordination; and, so far as I can remember,
 " excused himself for not being at my Ordination, by tel-
 " ling that he was obliged to wait upon a Lady at that
 " Time who lived in his Parish, and was in a dying Con-
 " dition. And Mr. *Currie* has assisted me at solemn Occa-
 " sions, as I have assisted him; which either says he did not
 " then look upon my Settlement as an Intrusion, or that he
 " thought not much of it. I would know from Mr. *Currie*,
 " who no doubt can best inform me of this, if upon better
 " Information he did not drop his Dissent from sustaining
 " my Call, and if he told not the Presbytery that he would
 " have it expunged? If so, no doubt he was then far from
 " judging my Settlement a violent one; and, if Mr. *Currie*
 " has been still of this Mind, to be sure he has been of-
 " fended still in his Heart at me: And therefore I want to
 " know what Way he will reconcile it with the Rules of the
 " Gospel, to have lodged this Offence in his Bosom, and
 " never once to tell me of it, till he sends it abroad to the
 " World from the Press. I must add, that as Mr. *Currie*
 " did never till now call my Settlement a violent one, so it
 " was never reckoned such by any of the Neighbourhood
 " that ever I heard of; and I am persuaded that it had

never

" never been accounted so by Mr. *Currie*, if I had continued in Conjunction with the established Church.

" The ordinary Effect of Intrusions, or violent Settlements, is a Scattering of the Flock of Christ; therefore I further want to know, if Mr. *Currie* will say that my Settlement in this Congregation issued in a Scattering of the Lord's Flock: Nay, it is well known that the Congregation, before my coming to it, was much divided and scattered, but was soon gathered together and united upon my Settlement in this Place: The Meeting-house did not continue but about Four or Five Sabbaths after my Ordination; and, tho' a Meeting-house was set up again some Years after, there could not be got so much as the Face of a Meeting, scarce Three or Four in all the Congregation: So that the Lord in his great Goodness prevented the Scattering of this Congregation again. I take not the Praise of this to myself, but I desire to give all the Praise to the Lord, whom I serve in the Work of the Ministry. I am surprised that Mr. *Currie* should give it out to the World, and so impose upon them, that Mr. *Ebenezer Erskine* did not countenance my Ordination. This is far from being Matter of Fact; for Mr. *Erskine* was present, and joined with the *Presbytery* in laying Hands upon my Head; and, if needful, this can be attested by many in my Congregation and in the Neighbourhood who were Witnesses.

" Wishing you much of the Master's Countenance, who is able to support us under all Opposition, I am,

R. D. B.

Yours affectionately,

Burntisland, Jan. 13.

1741.

JAMES THOMSON,

The above plain and ingenuous Account that the Reverend Mr. *Thomson* gives of his own Settlement speaks for itself; and I leave the Reader to judge for himself concerning Mr. *Currie*'s Ingenuity in the Stories he reports from the Press concerning the said Settlement.

I proceed to another of our Author's Stories, and 'tis one that concerns myself in particular. And the Occasion of it is this, *Def.* p. 97. I charge him with making a small Ac-

count of the grievous Backslidings of the Church of *Scotland* from her Reformation-purity: And the Proof I give of the Charge is, that in his *Essay*, p. 122. he says, "Most of the " Things laid to the Church of *Scotland* at this Day are " *only Omissions*." And, p. 174. when he mentions it as one of the principal Grounds of our Secession, that no Warning hath been emitted against the Errors and blasphemous Heresies vented among us; the Neglect of this, *says he*, is *only* an Omission. I must beg Leave to notice a twofold Accusation that he brings against me in this Place, before I enter upon this private Story: The one is of citing his Words in an unfair Manner, *Vind.* p. 102. *he says*, I stop at the Words *only Omissions*, and do not tell what he adds in the first Citation, *viz.* "That *he says*, I never read of " any who thought *Omissions* in a true Church of Christ to " be a sufficient Cause of Separation." And, in the second Place quoted, he complains that I omitted the following Words; "*Omissions* will not be reckoned a just Ground of " Separation, more than it was for any to *separate* from the " Church of *Corinth*, &c. because they did not emit such " Warnings when Errors had crept in among them." I may tell Mr. *Currie*, I agree with him, that *Omissions* in a true Church of Christ are not sufficient Cause of Separation; but then he and I differ widely as to our Sense of a true Church of Christ. Likewise I observe in my *Defence*, p. 98. that *Omissions* may even turn the purest Churches of Christ into Synagogues of *Satan*; and that the *Omissions* complained of in this National Church are such, whereby she has forfeited a Claim to the Scripture-characters of a true Church; and there I give my Reasons for the above Assertion. Tho' Mr. *Currie* pretends to follow me Foot for Foot, yet he passeth them over in deep Silence; and therefore I have more Reason to complain of his unfair Dealing with me in this Part of his *Vindication*. If he had treated the Argument as he should have done, he should have made Answer unto the Reasons that I have advanced, to prove that *Omissions* may turn the purest Churches into Synagogues of *Satan*. As for what he adds concerning the Churches of *Corinth*, *Pergamos* and *Thyatira*, Mr. *Currie* cannot prove that they continued in the *Omissions* they were guilty of, after the Admonitions and Warnings that were given them; and therefore these Instances are not to the Purpose. But I refer the Reader to what I have more fully said in my printed *Letter*, p. 22, 23 & 24. concerning the Churches of *Pergamos* and *Thyatira*, which Mr. *Currie* has never yet answered. The

other Accusation he brings against me is, That my Scope in this Place is to blacken his Character, for which (*he says*) he forgives me. As for the Charge of Blackning his Character; if he lays himself open in his Manner of Writing to my just Observations upon him, he himself is to blame for what he calls a Blackning of his Character, and none else. When he says, It is my Scope in this Place to blacken his Character, this is one of his uncharitable Heart-judgings, for which I heartily forgive him. And, after all, it is Truth which I affirm, even when he has got his Words at the full Length he desires, viz. That he reckons the grievous Backslidings of the Church of Scotland to be *only Omissions*, or that the most Part of them are *only Omissions*; by which he seems to me to make a very small Account of the Departure of our present Judicatories from our Reformation-purity.

I come now to his private Story: Thus it lies in his *Essay*, p. 122. "Sometime since 1733, I heard a worthy Minister, for whom our late Separatists have justly much Regard, declare he did not think *Omissions* in a Church sufficient Ground of Separation from her, &c." He repeats it in his *Vindication*, p. 102. in the following Manner; "Mr. Wilson is far from being *blate* or *bashful*, to object this unto me, when his Memory cannot but serve him so as to remember, that it was Mr. Wilson himself who declared unto me, *He did not think Omissions in a Church sufficient Grounds of Separation from her.*" And this, *he says*, was after the Assembly 1734, when he came back with Mr. Wilson and the Reverend Mr. Moncrieff from Edinburgh to Kinghorn. Upon the above Story I must tell him, That Mr. Currie is far from being *blate* or *bashful*, when he brings to the Press what he alledges did pass in a private Conversation betwixt Edinburgh and Kinghorn. I have not found within the Compass of my small Reading, that the most insignificant or the most trifling Writer has treated his Opposite in such a Manner.

As for the Words he alledges upon me, tho' I cannot charge my Memory with every Expression that dropt from me at that Time, yet I can with Confidence say, That Mr. Currie has misrepresented my Words. My Reason for this Confidence is, Because I look upon the above Expression, That *Omissions in a Church are not sufficient Grounds of Separation from her*, to be lax and unsound; and also, because they are contrary to my fixed Sentiments, since I formed my Thoughts about the Nature of Church-communion, which

was long before 1734. And I have given my Reasons why I judge that *Omissions* in a Church may give just Ground and Cause for Departure from Ecclesiastical Union and Conjunction with her, which, as I have observed, Mr. Currie has past over in deep Silence. As to my Thoughts after the Assembly 1734, they are contained in my printed Letter, p. 4. where I say, "I own, that, after the Meeting of the Assembly 1734, I was in much Perplexity about our continuing in a State of Secession; it occasioned many Thoughts of Heart unto me, to understand what was Duty in the present Case: But as I had no Hesitation about my Duty, when I did, together with my other three Brethren, declare a Secession from the Judicatories of this Church, in our Protestation before the Commission November 1733; so, when I have observed the Conduct of the said Judicatories since the Year 1734, — I have been gradually cleared, and more and more confirmed, that it is our Duty to continue in a State of Secession." Tho' I do not remember that I used the above Freedom with Mr. Currie, yet this is the utmost that dropt from me in any Conversation about that Time.

The Proceedings of the Assembly 1734 made me charitably hope that the Judicatories would set about Reformation-work; but, alas! their After-conduct gave me Ground to fear, as I express myself in the Place above quoted in my Letter, that the Words of the Prophet might justly be applied unto them, *Jer. 8. 4, 5. Moreover, thou shalt say unto them, Thus saith the Lord, Shall they fall, and not rise? Shall they turn away, and not return? Why then is this People of Jerusalem slidden back, by a perpetual Backsliding? they hold fast Deceit, they refuse to return.* To which I may add, Verse 6. *I bearkned and heard, but they spake not aright: No Man repented him of his Wickedness, saying, What have I done? Every one turned to his Course, as the Horse rusheth into the Battle.*

And therefore, altho' I desire to mourn for the Conduct of the Judicatories since the foresaid Time, yet I desire likewise to bless the Lord, who cleared my Way, and led me, by his good Hand upon me, to join my Brethren, tho' the unworthiest among them, in the Testimony that is now lifted up for the Truths of our Lord Jesus, in Opposition to the manifold Injuries that are done, both to his Truths and Members, by the present Judicatories of this established Church.

I shall only trouble the Reader with another of his Stories.

I cannot call it a private Story or *Hearsay*; neither shall I use his coarse Expression, a *Brat* of his own begetting; but I'll venture to call it a *Fiction* of his own Brain: 'Tis upon the Occasion of an Objection that he makes against the *National Covenant*, Essay, p. 185. where, having mentioned some Words of the *Covenant*, he adds, "If I mistake not, "most Part of the Seven Brethren, sometime since 1732, "would had a Scruple to swear" in the Terms he objects against. To which I reply, *Def.* p. 280. "That Mr. Currie "is very much mistaken; for all the Seceding Brethren may "safely swear the *Covenant* in the said Terms." And I give my Reasons for this, which Mr. Currie never offers to answer; but instead of this, *Vind.* p. 256. says he, "But 'tis "observable, Mr. Wilson does not say they all will or are "ready to swear it in such Terms. 'Tis very probable his "*Defence* was read over to the *Brethren*, but it seems they "have not allowed him to say they were all ready to swear "it in the above Terms."

I should never have thought it worth my while to notice what is above, was it not to acquaint the Reader, that, whatever Escapes or Defects are in the *Defence*, they are not to be imputed to the Brethren of the Associate Presbytery; for none of them ever read it, or heard it read, till they saw it from the Press, except my two Reverend Brethren in the Neighbourhood, Masters *Moncrieff* and *Fisher*; and they had Time to read only some Sheets of it. If I had not design'd to have published it about the Meeting of the *Assembly* 1739, I would have given the whole of it to be revised, not only by them, but also by the other Brethren in the *Presbytery*; and in this Case it would have come abroad with greater Advantage: But tho' it comes abroad under this Disadvantage, yet I humbly judge that the Argument for Secession, as I have laid it, stands its Ground against any Thing Mr. Currie has said in his *Vindication*, as I am afterwards to shew.

Mr. Currie sometimes speaks as if he were writing against a Deed of the whole *Associate Presbytery*, as *Vind.* p. 2. It seems he conceives himself such a mighty Champion for the Cause of the present Judicatories, that all the Seceding Brethren must lay their Heads together, to answer his Writings: But I can assure him, they had never such an high Opinion of them, and that they judge they have more important Work on their Hands, than to take any manner of Notice of his Performances. I can also assure him, that, in the Management of the present Debate, he has only to deal

with one of the *Associate Presbytery*, and with one who reckons himself more insufficient than any of his *Brethren* for engaging in it, but who was led into it in the Manner he reports, *Def.* p. 14. And as he is perswaded of the Justness and Goodness of the Cause ; so, desiring to depend upon the Grace and Strength of the *Lord Jesus*, he is not afraid to go forth against Mr. *Currie*, even when he takes the Field arm'd *cap apee* with the Names of great *Authors*, *private Stories* and *Hearsays*, and with the grievous *Accusations* of *Untruths*, *Inconsistencies* and *Slanders*, &c. Mr. *Currie* thinks fit, in his *Vindication*, sometimes to tell his Reader, That Mr. *Wilson*, or *some others for him*, has wrote so and so. I shall not pretend to tell what Purpose he intends to serve by such *Insinuations*; I shall only say, That I doubt not of the Truth of what some alledge, that, since the Reverend *Brother* who was his ordinary Assistant in his former Writings is now removed by Death, he has now and then borrowed the Pen of some of his new Friends, it may be the *Modest* and *Humble Enquirer*, and his Associates: But, whatever is in this, I hope Mr. *Currie* will not accuse me of Want of due Respect unto him, if I sometimes answer him in his above *Dialect*.

I have now done with the greatest Part of Mr. *Currie's Vindication*; and I doubt not but he will alledge, as *Vind.* p. 8. " Mr. *Wilson* (*says he*) hath a dexterous and easy Way " of answering what is unanswerable, and that is by passing " it over in profound Silence." For my Part, I shall not be so vain as to say, that any Thing I have offered upon the Subject of *Secession* is unanswerable; I know a good Cause may have a weak Defender: But I shall leave Mr. *Currie* to his self-confident Boastings, when I have made two Observations; the one is, That I reckon the Argument from the Words of Mr. *Durham* in the Place above directed unto, as also the Argument I have brought against Mr. *Currie* from the Paper, intituled, *Reasons of Not-accession*, quoted also above, both unanswerable; and therefore Mr. *Currie* has passed them over in profound Silence. Other Instances of this Nature may afterwards fall in my Way. The other Observation I make is, That Mr. *Currie* has past over in profound Silence many of my Arguments for *Secession* from the present *Judicatories*; and such of them as he has touched, tho' I shall not say they are unanswerable, yet I'll venture to say, that Mr. *Currie* has said nothing to take off the Force and Weight that is in them. I shall give some Instances for Proof of this, after I have considered how Mr. *Currie* deals in stating the Question, to which I now proceed.

C H A P. II.

Wherein it is shewn, in some few Instances, that Mr. Currie does not enter into the true State of the Question betwixt the Associate Presbytery and the present Judicatories.

I Judged it necessary, in the *Defence*, to give a short historical Account of some Contendings in a Way of Church-communion, for some Years immediately before the *Secession* was stated. This I thought needful to clear the State of the Question, and to justify the Conduct of the Seceding Brethren: Therefore I take Notice, in my Introduction to the said *Defence*, that Testimonies against the Backslidings of a Church, in a Way of Communion with the backsliding Party, must be given in one of the three following Ways: Either *doctrinally* from the Pulpit; or by *Protestations* and *Dissents* in Judicatories; or by *Petitions* and *Representations* unto them from such Ministers or other Church-members as are grieved with their Proceedings.

I give Instances in each of the above Particulars, in my Introduction, to shew that there was a gradual Contending in a Way of Church-communion with the present Judicatories, before any *Secession* was stated from them: As also I shew, that the several Ways of Contending above-mentioned were condemned by the Judicatories; yea, that they were so resolute in their backsliding Course, that they thrust out some *Ministers* from Communion with them, merely for contending in one of the Ways above mentioned, viz. by a Protestation, for their own Exoneration against the Course of Defection that was carrying on. The Instances that I give in my Introduction are plain Matter of Fact; they are not, nor can they be, refused by Mr. Currie; tho' he spends his Time upon some unnecessary Wranglings, which I do not think worth my While to notice: Such as, when he alledges, *Vind.* p. 30. That the above Enumeration I give of the Ways and Means of Testifying is not compleat; and the refusing Petitions and Representations was but the Deed of one *Assembly*, and therefore the Argument is only from a Particular to a General. But that which I here mainly intend is, to inform the Reader,

that the Design of the above-mentioned *Narrative* is to confirm an Observation that I made, *printed Letter*, p. 7. viz. "That when the Bulk and Body of the Office-bearers of a Church carry on a Course of Defection, and when the smaller Part are grieved with their Proceedings, they ought to use proper Means for reclaiming their sinning and offending Brethren, before they associate together by themselves for the Exercise of the Keys: It may be necessary to deal with them to return to their Duty, by *Petitions, Representations, doctrinal Testimonies* and the like." Likewise, I observe, "That when the smaller Part, that desire to keep the Word of the Lord's Patience, have tried the above and the like Means without Success; and when, notwithstanding of *Remonstrances* in Judicatories and *doctrinal Testimonies* against them, the Majority of the Office-bearers of a Church go on resolutely in a Course of Defection from the Lord; then 'tis the Duty of such as would desire to be found faithful, tho' they may be few in Number, to associate together for the Exercise of the Keys of Government and Discipline, for the Ends for which they are committed unto them by the glorious Head of the Church." And here, I further notice, That the above-mentioned Means ought in a particular manner to be used before a Secession is made from such with whom we have been in Ecclesiastical Communion. And the Case stands thus with the Seceding Ministers; they were formerly in Ecclesiastical Communion with the present Judicatories, and they found that a Course of *Defection* was carried on by the said Judicatories, and they tried all Means that lay in their Power, and which they thought proper, for stopping the Current of *Defection*; they joined in Presbyterial Instructions to the several *Assemblies*; they tried *Petitions, Representations* and *doctrinal Testimonies*; they tried *Dissents* and *Protestations*, for their *Exoneration*; they continued testifying after this manner, till the *Judicatories* thrust some of them out from their Communion, *Anno 1733*. Therefore, as I observe in the Close of the Introduction, the Question comes out in this Shape; Whether or not 'tis their Duty to continue to testify against a Course of Defection, in the *Situation* into which they have been brought by the holy and wise Providence of God? Or, the Question comes out after this manner; Whether or not, when the *Judicatories* of this established Church are carrying on a Course of *Defection* in Face of manifold *Remonstrances* against their sinful Proceedings; yea, Whether or not, when they refuse to be reclaimed,

and, instead of regarding the ordinary Means that have been used for that End, they did at first thrust out some Ministers for contending with them in a Way of Church-communion, and now, by an Act and Deed of their late pretended Assembly, have done what in them lies, *judicially* to slay such as mint at Witnessing-work; Whether or not, I say, in any of the above Cases, our Secession from them is not just and warrantable? And whether or not it is our Duty to continue to contend for Truth, and against present and former *Defections*, in a Way of Secession from the present established *Judicatories*? As this is the Shape in which the Question turns out from the *Narrative* I give in my *Introduction*, except what concerns the Act and Deed of the late Assembly; so Mr. Currie has spent his Time upon some trifling Remarks, without ever noticing the Question as stated above.——He never considers, that our Secession is such as we have been gradually by the Providence of God led unto, after a Series of Contending by the ordinary Means against the sinful Steps and Proceedings of *Judicatories*. But, instead of this, Mr. Currie makes a Clamour and Noise about some Expressions in our Protestation against the Assembly 1733, wherein we express a very great Regard for the *Judicatories* of the Church. And when I tell him, That the above *Protestation* for our Exoneration was one of the Means we were then using of dealing with them for their Repentance and Reformation before the Secession was stated; says he, *Vind. p. 157*. "Albeit it was before the Secession, I hope they did not juggle nor dissemble with the *Judicatories* of this Church." I leave his indirect Charge of *Juggling* and *Disimulation*, amongst his other uncharitable Heart-judgings. I shall only observe, that our Dealing with them by the above-mentioned Protestation, as also by all the other Means mentioned, was an Evidence of our very great and sincere Regard to them; I know no greater Regard we can express to any *Judicatory* under Heaven, when they are carrying on a Course of Defection from the Lord, than to deal with them for their Repentance and Reformation: We dealt with them to reform, and after this manner testified our very great Regard for them; yea, we dealt with them to reform, still, upon the Matter, they said they would not reform, when they thrust some of us out in an arbitrary Way and Manner from their Communion.——We owned also at that Time their just Power and Authority; But, what is that Power or Authority that any Church-judicatory has? It is a Power for Edification, and not for Destruction. And tho' we have

now, upon just and weighty Grounds, found and declared, that the present *Judicatories* are not *lawful* nor *right-constitute* Courts of Christ, and consequently, while they continue in their backsliding Course, are only *pretended Assemblies, Synods, &c.* yet I'll own at the same Time to Mr. Currie, that they have a Power and Authority to return to their Duty, to set about Reformation-work, to condemn their own sinful Proceedings, and to exercise the Keys of Government and Discipline for the glorious Ends and Purposes for which they are given by the exalted Head to the Office-bearers of the Church; and, if they would do so, our Secession from them would soon be at an End, and we could, in a very great Consistency with all the Testimonies we have given against them and their Proceedings, embrace them as lawful and right constitute Courts of Christ: And therefore Mr. Currie, if he pleaseth, may spare the Charge he lays against us, from our *Protestation, Anno 1733, of Inconsistencies* in our Conduct, Juggling and Dissimulation.

After the NARRATIVE which I give in my *Introduction*, I endeavour, in the first Chapter of the DEFENCE, to clear the State of the Question; where I premise some Observes concerning *Church-communion*. None of them are controverted by Mr. Currie, neither can he controvert them, unless he give up with our Reformed and Presbyterian Principles: And the Reader may easily see, that if they are duly considered, and justly applied to the Question before us, they will cut off some of Mr. Currie's Wranglings about the State of the Question, as also some of the grievous Charges that he endeavours to fix upon our just and necessary Secession. Only I must observe, That when I affirm in the Close of my seventh Observe, that the outward Bond and Ligament of our Union and Conjunction in this National Church is, that System of pure and sound Doctrine, that Order of Government, Worship and Discipline, held forth from the Word of God in our Confession of Faith, Books of Discipline, Form of Church-government, and Directory for Worship, in the Profession and Obedience of which all Ranks of Persons in this Land are bound and obliged to abide by the *National and Solemn League and Covenant*; Upon this Mr. Currie accuses me of *asserting* that which is not *Matter of Fact*, and he asserts, That we are not obliged by these *Covenants* to our Confession of Faith, Form of Church-government, and Directory for Worship, tho' he owns we are bound to abide in these. But, why do not our *Covenants* oblige us to abide in these? Because, says Mr. Currie, they

were not in Being when our Covenants were framed. But, was not that System of pure and sound Doctrine, that Order of Government, Worship and Discipline, held forth from the Word of God in our Confession of Faith, &c. in Being when our National Covenant was framed? I affirm that our subordinate Standards, as they were composed by the *Westminster Assembly*, contain on the Matter the very same System of pure and sound Doctrine, that Order of Government, Worship and Discipline, which had been received and embraced by the *Church of Scotland* from her Reformation, and which was sworn to in our *National Covenant*; and, if Mr. Currie can shew the contrary, he may then accuse me of writing what is not Matter of Fact. Likewise, our Confession of Faith, Form of Church-government, &c. are received and embraced, by the several Acts of Assembly adopting the same, as Parts and Branches of that Uniformity sworn to in the Solemn League and Covenant: And Mr. Currie cannot refuse that the Confession of Faith, Form of Church-government, and Directory for Worship, had been received by the *Church of Scotland* before the Solemn League and Covenant was received *Anno 1649*; therefore it is a very great Mistake in Mr. Currie, to call it no worse, to accuse me in the above manner of asserting in this Place what is not Matter of Fact.

In the 2d Section of this first Chapter of the *Defence*, I give several Instances from his *Essay*, wherein I shew that the Question is mis-stated by Mr. Currie. I shall in this Place give two or three Instances from his *Vindication*, to shew that he has not entred into the true State of the Question, and that he continues to mis-state the same.

I observe, *Def. p. 39.* That the *Author of the Essay mis-states* the Question, when he affirms, That violent Intrusions were the chief Ground of Complaint in the Year 1733, when our Secession from the Judicatories was first declared. Upon this Mr. Currie, *Vind. p. 38.* appeals to Mr. Erskine's *Synodical Sermon*, where he says, "The great Thing complained of is the Act of Assembly 1732 anent the Settling of Ministers, and violent Intrusions." Granting it is true, that Mr. Erskine in his Sermon chiefly complained of Intrusions; does it therefore follow, that the Brethren stated their Secession *mainly* upon violent Intrusions? But says Mr. Currie, It is evident to a Demonstration from what is said in their *State of the Process*, p. 78. where 'tis said, "Violent Intrusions are the *main Ground*, at present, of Mr. Erskine's *Testimony*, as well as of his Brethrens *Adherence* unto him;

“ as is plain from the Terms in which both his Protest and their Adherence are conceived.” If the Reader will believe Mr. Currie, his Assertions are frequently self-evident, or evident to a Demonstration; and yet I can assure the Reader, that there is no such Thing asserted in the Place of the *State of the Process* above directed unto, viz. That violent Intrusions were the chief Ground of the Complaint. As the Words above quoted do plainly refer to the Protest entred against the Assembly 1733, so that Protestation was expressly for Liberty to testify against the Act of Assembly 1732, or the like Defections, upon all proper Occasions. And one may evidently see, that violent Intrusions are one Thing, and Liberty to testify against these or the like Defections is another Thing. The chief Thing that was complained of at that Time by the said Protest was, the shutting the Mouths of Ministers, by mere Church-authority, from testifying faithfully and freely against Steps of Defection. This is what the Reasoning in the *State of the Process* turns upon, as one may see who compares the Words above quoted with the preceeding Page. As Mr. Erskine in his Synodical Sermon testified particularly and expressly against the Act 1732; so this gave the first Rise to the Act and Sentence of the Assembly 1733, whereby he was rebuked for *impugning Acts of Assembly*, and Proceedings of *Church-judicatories*; and the above Sentence of Rebuke was the chief Ground of the Protestation that was entred, for Liberty to testify against the Act 1732 or the like Defections. Likewise their Protestation entred before the Commission November 1733, wherein their Secession is declared, mentions the following Grounds of the same, viz. That the Judicatories were carrying on a Course of Defection from our Reformed and Covenanted Principles, and particularly were suppressing Ministerial Freedom and Faithfulness, in testifying against the present Backslidings of this Church, and inflicting Censures upon Ministers, for witnessing by *Protestations* and otherwise against the same. Thus the Reader may see from what is above, that the chief Ground of Complaint was not violent Intrusions, and that our Secession was never founded upon any one Step of Defection, considered abstractly and by itself; but upon a complex Course of Defection carried on with a high Hand by the present Judicatories: Hence, altho’ violent Intrusions were justly complained of, yet the first and immediate Point, upon which the Secession was stated, was the Suppressing of Ministerial Freedom as above: And therefore I still affirm, that it is a mis-stating of the Question,

sion, when Mr. Currie asserts that violent Intrusions were the chief Ground of the Complaint.

Mr. Currie goes on, *Vind.* p. 39. Then, says he, "never a Word of Professor Simson's damnable Errors, never a Sentence in all Mr. Erskine's Synodical Sermon anent them." And after a Quotation from a Paper of mine, intituled, *A Discourse concerning some prevailing Evils of the Times*, from whence he alledges, the Brethren could formerly make some Apology for the Church of Scotland as well as others; Mr. Currie adds, "But now the Brethren have other Designs to carry on; then their Impressions as to the Evil of Professor Simson's Errors were like other Folks," &c. Here again Mr. Currie runs out into his bitter and uncharitable Heart-judgings: He speaks, as if the Concern we have expressed about doctrinal Truths, did flow from a Principle for carrying on our own Designs. But I shall leave Mr. Currie to such Railings as I find here and in the following Page; only I must observe, that when he affirms, That then there was never a Word of Professor Simson's damnable Errors, if he is not mocking at the Concern the Brethren profess for these, he is surely writing at Random; for he cannot but know, that the Affair of the Doctrine was particularly noticed in the several Contendings that were before our Secession from the Judicatories, as I have shown in the Introduction to the *Defence*: And particularly, Mr. Currie cannot but know, that, when the Process against the protesting Ministers was upon the Field, they did, in their Representations given in to the Commission August 1733, take particular Notice of Mr. Simson's damnable Errors, and of the Conduct of the Judicatories in that important Matter. We did not at that Time confine our Testimony to violent Intrusions, but did, upon the Matter, take in what had been complained of in former Instructions, Representations and Petitions: And in November thereafter the Judicatories thrust us out from Communion with them, with our above Testimony against them in our Hands. As for what he alledges, That there was never a Sentence in all Mr. Erskine's Synodical Sermon against Mr. Simson's damnable Errors; I shall only refer Mr. Currie to the first of the five last Directions given in that excellent Sermon, and he will see the contrary.

As for Mr. Currie's Propositions that are laid down in his *Essay*, second Chapter, I can well refer my Reader to what I have said, *Defence*, Chap. 1. Sect. 2. and he may compare what is said there with Mr. Currie's *Vindication*, Chap. 4.

Sect. 2, where the Reader may see with his own Eyes, that Mr. Currie has never taken off the Force of what I have observed, particularly upon the Ambiguity of some of his Propositions, as also his perverting the State of the Question. As for Instance, When he proves his fifth Proposition from some of Mr. Sheills's Words, *Vind.* p. 45. who says, "We may keep Fellowship with a true Church, tho' in many Things faulty and corrupt, as all Churches are in some measure in this militant State;" this is what I do not refuse. But Mr. Currie might have known, that the Question upon the Field betwixt him and me is, If this National Church as she is represented in her present Judicatories is a true Church, as the Terms are used in our Reformed Confessions? Likewise, when he tells us in his fifth Proposition, "That we are not to separate from a true Church of Christ, tho' her Faults and Corruptions be many;" I grant him, *Def.* p. 45. that if, by Faults and Corruptions, be meant personal Defects and Blemishes in the Walk and Practice of Church-members, that these are not Ground of Separation from a true Church: But I add, "That if by Faults and Corruptions be meant dangerous Errors or gross Scandals, which a Church refuseth to purge out, notwithstanding of Warnings and Admonitions given her; or Defections and Backslidings, carried on in her Ecclesiastical Capacity, from Points of Reformation once attained unto; then, I say, his above Proposition is what we use to call a Begging the Question." Unto this Mr. Currie replies, *Vind.* p. 45. I say, "This is a Slander upon his Mother-Church." It seems we must take his Say for sufficient Proof. But these and the like confident Assertions are nothing to Mr. Currie. He adds, Granting the Truth of what is alledged, "In the Church of Corinth there was a gross Error and Scandal; yet the Apostle commanded to keep Communion with that Church, instead of injoining Separation from her." Since Mr. Currie continues to make this one of his commonplace Arguments, I shall here notice once for all, that I have proved, *Def.* p. 53. that the Church of Corinth was a reforming Church; and that she took with the apostolick Warnings and Admonitions given her. To which Mr. Currie replies, *Vind.* p. 57. "But then, how long it was between his writing of his first and second Epistles is uncertain, and how long before writing his first Epistle that Error had been among some in that Church is also uncertain." But this is but mere Shift and Evasion: For whether the Time was long or short, in any of the Cases mentioned,

'tis the same Thing to me, in regard that it stands good what I affirm, That the Church of *Corinth* was in her Ecclesiastical Capacity a reforming Church, upon the Admonitions given her; and this Mr. *Currie* himself is obliged to acknowledge, when *he says*, " I grant it is not improbable " these *Office-bearers* did discharge their Duty with Success." Consequently there can be no Argument drawn from the gross Scandal and capital Error that was found among some in that Church, to continue in Conjunction with such Judicatories as refuse to be reformed, after the ordinary Means have been used to reclaim them.

Before I proceed to give other Instances of his mis-stating of the Question, I must observe, that when I read the Title of the 3d Chapter of Mr. *Currie's Essay*, wherein he proposes to instance some Things that are just Ground for Fasting, Mourning and Lamentation, yet are not sufficient Causes of Separation from a Church; I expected that Mr. *Currie* would have made a free and faithful Enumeration of some, at least, of the manifold Grounds of Mourning and Lamentation in our present Times; yet they are all past over by him in deep Silence: Only, he calls the Act of Assembly 1732 a bad Act, and makes some Acknowledgment that there may be much Ground to lament over a dead Ministry in many Places. Tho' the Lord Jesus has been blasphemed; tho' his supreme Deity, and the Deity of the Holy Ghost, has been impugned; tho' the Operations of the Holy Spirit have been ridiculed and burlesqued; tho' a Scheme of dangerous Errors, connected with an impudent Denial of the federal Headship of the first *Adam*, has been vented; and tho' this Scheme has been maintained at the Bar of our Judicatories; and tho' the Judicatories have not lifted up the Standard of a particular and express Testimony against the above gross Abominations; and tho' they have never found that they deserved a Place and Room in Causes of publick Fasting and Humiliation; likewise, tho' the Judicatories have lifted up their Authority and Power above the Authority of the King of *Zion*, in the Act 1732, and in the Acts 1733 against the protesting Ministers, and against the Ministers of *Dunfermline*; tho' they have scattered and broken the Heritage of God; and tho' all these are Grounds of Fasting, Mourning and Lamentation: Yet not one Word of them in a Chapter, wherein his professed Design is, to *instance some Things* that are Ground for Mourning and Lamentation; only he calls (as I have observed) the Act 1732 a bad Act, yet he nowhere in that Chapter reckons it a Cause of Mour-

ning. Upon this says Mr. Currie, *Vind.* p. 58. "If I reckoned it bad, it was as much as if I had said it was a Cause of Mourning; for I know nothing in a Church which is bad or evil, but what is to be mourned over; and, says he, I know of no venial Sins." Neither do I know of any venial Sins more than he; but I know that some Things may be *bad* in a Church, because in some circumstantiated Cases they may be inexpedient and not for Edification, which yet are not in themselves absolutely sinful: And therefore, if Mr. Currie had dealt faithfully in the Chapter wherein his professed Design is to instance the Grounds of Fasting and Humiliation, he ought plainly to have told his Reader, that the said Act was contrary to the Authority of the King of Zion, and absolutely sinful in itself; and that the Procedure of Judicatories in the Settlement of Ministers to this very Day, in the Terms of the said Act tho' now repealed, is a practical Justifying of the same; and that both these were and are just Grounds and Causes for Fasting, Humiliation and Mourning. Mr. Currie likewise tells his Reader, That in the *Essay*, p. 30, 32. that is, in another Chapter than this upon which my above Observe is made, he acknowledges that there is Ground to lament over the Compliance of Judicatories with Patronages. What then? 'Tis not to be found amongst his Instances of Humiliation mentioned in his 3d Chapter. Here was the Place where he should have told Scotland's Sins, and the Sins of the Church of Scotland, if he had answered the Title he gives to his Chapter: But the Truth is, if he had dealt freely and faithfully upon this Head, he would have been hard put to it, to have proven that the Secession from the present Judicatories is a Schism or groundless Separation; and therefore it was safest for him to wrap all up in some smooth Generals, in the Manner he has done in the Chapter mentioned. I conclude my Remarks upon his 3d Chapter with observing, *Def.* p. 53. "That he gives Vent to his Invectives against our Reforming Period, particularly against the Assembly 1638; as *Essay*, p. 20, 21." Unto which Mr. Currie replies, *Vind.* p. 58. "But, has he told what these Invectives are? No; you must take his bare Affirmation for Truth: And who, says he, can think Mr. Wilson, who is so tender that he would not for a World sit in a Judicatory of any such Church as the Church of Scotland, will speak any Thing but what is Truth?" I heartily pray that both Mr. Currie and I had more *Tenderness* than any of us have: But the above sneering Manner in which he delivers himself is no great

Evidence of any *Tenderness* of Spirit about him; yea, to me 'tis an Evidence of that *Levity* of Spirit that frequently discovers itself in his Management of this Subject. As for the above Charge he brings against me, *viz.* That I would have my Reader take my bare Affirmation for Proof; the Reader may see the Unjustice of it from my Words above quoted, where I direct him to the Pages of the *Essay*, where he will find how Mr. *Currie* treats the Act of *Assembly* 1638, which he frequently quotes as an unreasonable Act, and more unreasonable than any since that Time; and tells his Reader, "That *some* would say, that thereby that Assembly looked upon themselves to be infallible in their Decisions, and also, that they bind themselves to act by *implicite Faith*." Is there no Invective in all this?

Defence, Chap. 1. Sect. 3. I endeavour to declare the true State of the Question betwixt the present Judicatories and the Associate Presbytery, and I make several Observes for clearing the same. I must leave it to the Reader to compare them with Mr. *Currie's Vindication*, and let him judge for himself, if Mr. *Currie* has done Justice to my Observes as I have laid them. I shall only give two Instances, wherein Mr. *Currie* either clouds or perverts the true State of the Question.

The first Instance I give is what contains Matter of Wonder to Mr. *Currie*; and, because it contains something that he says he *wonders* at, therefore I shall briefly notice it: It is upon the third Observe that I make for fixing the State of the Question. And, because my Words are seldom fully or fairly represented by Mr. *Currie*, I shall report them myself, and they stand thus, *Def.* p. 65. "It is one Thing to depart from the Communion of a Church, and another Thing to depart from Communion with a Party in that Church, tho' the greatest Number, who are carrying on a Course of Defection and Backsliding: The Seceding Brethren have always refused, and they do upon good Grounds refuse, that they have made any Secession from the Church of Scotland. If the Church of Scotland is considered as her Principles are held forth from the Word of God in her Confession of Faith, Larger and Shorter Catechisms, Form of Church-government, Directory for Worship, and other laudable Acts and Constitutions of this National Church, the Seceding Ministers have openly declared and acknowledged their Adherence to all these, in their Judicial Act and Testimony; or, if her Principles are considered as they are solemnly avouched and sworn to in the

" National Covenant of *Scotland*, and the Solemn League
 " and Covenant of the three Nations, they have also in like
 " manner, in their foresaid *Act and Testimony*, acknow-
 " ledged the *inviolable Obligation* of these Solemn Oaths and
 " Covenants: But, if the Church of *Scotland* is considered
 " as *represented* in her *present Judicatories*, they own that
 " they have declared a Secession from them, and that they
 " cannot now act in Conjunction with them, as Members of
 " the same Ecclesiastical Body; and that because they are
 " carrying on a Course of Defection and Backsliding from
 " our Covenanted Uniformity, in Doctrine, Worship, Go-
 " vernment and Discipline, notwithstanding of manifold
 " Representations and Remonstrances made before them un-
 " to the contrary. Therefore the Question under our Con-
 " sideration is not concerning Secession from the Church of
 " *Scotland*, but concerning Secession from the *present Juda-*
 " *catories* of this National Church." I think my above
 Words do fully explain themselves; yet Mr. Currie thinks
 fit to make the following Reflection upon them, *Vind.* p. 71.
 " I could never but wonder what the Brethren mean by re-
 " fusing that they had separated from the Church of *Scot-*
 " *land*; but, when come to the 65th Page of his *Defence*
 " he tells, that by the Church of *Scotland* they mean her
 " Principles contain'd in the Confession of Faith, &c. and
 " other laudable Acts and Constitutions of this Nationa
 " Church, and they refuse that they have made a Secession
 " from these, &c." I shall pass over Mr. Currie's Charge
 that our Manner of stating the Question as above is far from
plain Dealing; and that *some say*, It deserves no other Name
 than *gross Dissimulation*, p. 72. 'Tis unpleasant to me to rake
 into his frequent Charges and Insinuations, which savour so
 much of a bitter and an uncharitable Spirit. I shall only
 notice the Reason he gives why he wonders at what is con-
 tain'd in my above Manner of stating the Question, as it
 stands in his *Vind.* p. 71. at the Foot: *says he*, " Can she
 " be a *Presbyterian* Church without Judicatories? Who
 " could speak of this without a Smile? to tell People, The
 " Doctrine maintain'd in the Confession of Faith is the
 " Church of *Scotland*. If so, then she is a pure Church
 " indeed." As for his above Query, which no doubt
 Mr. Currie reckons a very pungent one, I ask him again,
 Where was the *Presbyterian* Church of *Scotland*, when for
 several Years after 1661 she had neither *Assemblies*, *Synods*,
Presbyteries nor *Sessions*? I hope she was not extinguished
 during that Period; nay, the Lord preserved her; And all

such

such who in any Corner of the Land adhered unto, and in their Sphere witnessed for, the Covenanted Principles of this Church, were the *Presbyterian Church of Scotland*. I shall leave Mr. Currie to his Laugh, or Smile, when I have told him, That, for my Part, I judge it Matter of Mourning, when I see one of his Profession and Character diverting himself after this Manner upon such a grave Subject; when he says, "To tell People the Doctrine maintained in the *Confession of Faith*, &c. is the Church of *Scotland*." I ask, Who is it that tells People this? In my above Observe I speak not of Principles and Doctrines abstractly, but of the Principles of the *Church of Scotland* held forth from the Word of God, &c. and as they are solemnly avouched and sworn to in our National Covenant. When I speak of the Principles of a Church, and of Principles avouched and sworn unto, do not the Words plainly import that such Doctrines and Principles have been own'd and confessed by a Body of People in our Land, yea, by the Body of the People in this Land? And, if it will satisfy Mr. Currie's Wonder, he may go to our Reformed Divines who have treated upon the Subject of Secession, and he may learn from them the Meaning of the Terms as they are laid in my above Observe concerning the State of the Question: Thus they express themselves; "We refuse that we have separated from the antient Apostolick Church of *Rome*, but our Separation is from the present corrupted and degenerate Church of *Rome*, as *Turret. de necessaria Secessione, Disput. prima, Sect. 26.* and *Voet. de desperata causa Papatus, Lib. 3. Sect. tertia, Cap. 10.* And tho' Mr. Currie should wonder, laugh or smile at it, I must tell him, that our Secession is not from the primitive Reforming and Covenanting Church of *Scotland*, but from the present backsliding Judicatories. 'Tis like, Mr. Currie will now cry out, that I put the Church of *Scotland* upon the same Footing with the Church of *Rome*, as he does very unjustly, *Vind. p. 29.* upon a Comparison for Illustration, which I make, *Def. p. 20.* but I hope no fair Reasoner will alledge, that Comparisons of this Kind put Things or Persons compared upon the same Footing. I shall only further observe upon this Head, That when Mr. Currie, or some others for him, affirm, *Vind. p. 80.* "That the Constitution of a Church, together with her Principles, is not the Church;" I cannot conceive what metaphysical Idea or Notion Mr. Currie or his learned Assistants have formed to themselves of the Term, *Principles of a Church*: For my Part, when I speak of the *Principles of a Church*, I cannot form to myself

any other Notion of the Expression, than a Company of Men and Women associate together, who have either owned or are owning and confessing *such Principles*.

I shall only give another Instance of Mr. Currie's perverting the State of the Question, and it is, his affirming that our present Secession, and erecting ourselves into a *Presbyterian Church*, is a setting up a *Presbyterian Church* within a *Presbyterian Church*, Vind. p. 13, 74. This I likewise call a perverting the State of the Question; and my Reason for it is, That this National Church, tho' she bears the *Presbyterian* Name, and has the outward Form and Shadow of *Presbyterian* Government, yet she is exercising a Lordly and Magisterial Power over the Heritage of God, she is ruling the Flock of Christ with Rigour, and perverting the Keys of Government and Discipline; and therefore, tho' she has the *Presbyterian* Name, yet she has not the *Thing* itself, and her Government is not a whit better than if its Form and Model were *Prelatical*. And if Mr. Currie can bear it, without charging me with setting his established Church upon an equal Footing with *Rome* and *England*; I shall give him another Comparison for the Illustration of this Subject, viz. The Secession of the Protestants from the Church of *Rome* was never reckoned a Rearing up of a Christian Church within a Christian Church, but only the Departure of such who desired to cleave to the pure and primitive Institutions of Christianity, from the Majority of an Ecclesiastical Body who, under the Christian Name and Profession, had overthrown and subverted, in innumerable Instances, the pure Doctrines and Institutions of Christianity. In like manner the Secession of the Protestant Dissenters from the Church of *England* is not a Rearing up of a *Protestant Church* within a *Protestant Church*, but a Departure from the Majority of that Ecclesiastical Body, who, under the Protestant Name and Profession, retain many of the Abominations of *Rome*, both in her Worship, Government and Discipline, and who refuse to reform. Even so, our Secession from the present established Church of *Scotland*, is not an Erecting a *Presbyterian Church* within a *Presbyterian Church*, but a Departure from Ecclesiastical Communion with an Ecclesiastick Body, who refuse, in their Ecclesiastical Capacity, to make a publick judicial Confession of many important and weighty Truths, held forth from the Word of God in our Confession of Faith, in Opposition unto the open and manifest Injuries that have been done to the same; and who are, in many particular Instances, subverting our *Presbyterian* Order and Government.

Tho'

"That the Brethren do not understand their own Principles," and "that they have no fixed Principle upon this Head," or, "that they clasp with one another upon this Head," *Vind.* p. 72. yet I hope, from what I have observed, the Reader will see that the Brethren are consistent with themselves, with one another, and with the Truth itself, when they affirm, that they have made a Secession from the present Judicatories, but not from the Church of Scotland.

I shall conclude this Chapter when I have observed, that our present Secession from the Judicatories is not a Secession from the Christian, Catholick, Visible Church; this is our New Testament Mount Zion, unto which a Gospel-ministry and Gospel-ordinances are primarily given, 1 Cor. 12. 28. But our Secession is a Departure from a corrupt Part of the Catholick visible Body, upon the Account of their Defections and Backslidings continued in, and from which they refuse to reform, tho' the proper Means have been used to reclaim them. This Observation leans to the first of my four general Observes upon Church-communion, *Def.* Chap. 1. Sect. 4. And, if this were duly noticed, it answers all the Arguments that Mr. Currie brings against our Secession, from the Practice of the Prophets under the Old Testament, and from the Practice of Christ and his Apostles as the same is recorded by the Evangelists, as I have more fully evinced, *Def.* Chap. 3. Sect. 1. Again, our Secession is not a Departure from any of the Protestant Churches, in so far as they maintain the Protestant Testimony against Rome Antichristian; but it is a Departure from Ecclesiastical Union and Conjunction with Judicatories, who have, in many particular Instances, departed from the Protestant Reformed Testimony, as the same was lifted up in Scotland, in her Reforming and Covenanting Times; according to my seventh Observe in the above quoted Section. Likewise, our present Secession is not a Departure from the Principles of the Church of Scotland, as they have been confessed, acknowledged, and sworn unto, by this whole Church and Land; but it is a Departure from Ecclesiastical Union and Conjunction with the present Judicatories, who not only refuse to confess and acknowledge many of the above Principles, in Opposition to the Contradiction they have met with; but who likewise, in many particular Instances, walk contrary unto them. And in the last Place, to use some of Mr. Sheills's Words in his *Treatise on Church-communion*, p. 15, 23, 24. Our present Secession is not a Departure from Union and Conjunction with

such Judicatories as are promoting Reformation in Doctrine, Worship, Discipline and Government, and opposing Popery, Prelacy, Erastianism, Sectarianism, and whatsoever is contrary to sound Doctrine and the Power of Godliness, according to the Word of God, our Confession of Faith and Covenants; nay, in all our Proceedings we plead for Union and Conjunction with such: But our Secession is a Departure from Judicatories, who, instead of promoting, are bearing down a judicial Testimony to many important Truths, and who are exercising a lordly Dominion over the Flock and Heritage of God, and who are giving up the Rights and Privileges of Christ's Kingdom unto Erastian Usurpations upon the same, and who, instead of returning to the Lord, and to our Reformation Standards and Testimony agreeable to the Word of God, do persecute and cast out of their Synagogues such as desire to confess our Reformed Principles, and in their Stations to adhere to the same, according to the Rules laid down in the holy Scripture, and the solemn Covenant-engagements that this whole Church and Land are under to the most high God. But this leads me to



C H A P. III.

Wherein it is shown, that Mr. Currie has not entred into the Argument, as it is stated in the Defence, for Secession from the present Judicatories.

THE Argument as I have laid it, for Secession from the present Judicatories, runs in the following Manner: When the Majority of a particular visible Church do, in their Ecclesiastical or Judicative Capacity, go on in a Course of Defection from Reformation-purity once attained unto, and will not be reformed, after the ordinary Means have been used to reclaim them; then, and in this Case, the minor Part, tho' but very few in Number, who desire to be found faithful unto the Lord, may, yea, ought to depart from Church-communion with the backsliding Part; and such as are Office-bearers among them may warrantably exercise the Keys of Discipline and Government, in a *distinct Capacity* from the *Majority*, who are the *backsliding Part*, for these Ends and Purposes for which they are

given

given unto the Church by her glorious and exalted Head : But the *Majority* of this particular visible Church are going on in a Course of Defection in the manner above-mentioned ; therefore such as desire to be found faithful to the Lord, and to hold fast the Purity once attained unto, may and ought, tho' the *minor* Part by far, to depart from Church-communion with the *backsliding* Part ; and such as are Office-bearers amongst them may warrantably exercise the Keys of Government and Discipline in the manner likewise above-mentioned.

The first Proposition in the above Argument lies in express Terms in the *Preface to the Defence*, p. 7. Mr. Currie, in his pretended Answers to my Preface, passeth over this Proposition. I tell my Reader, in the Place quoted, That it is a Principle upon which my Reasonings for Secession from the present Judicatories are founded ; and that it is a Reformation-principle, or a Principle upon which the Reformed Churches set out, and carried on Reformation-work : Since Mr. Currie does not call the Truth of this Principle in question, I may take it for granted, that he acknowledges it. As for the second Proposition in my above Argument, viz. That this particular visible Church, in her Ecclesiastical or Judicative Capacity, is going on in a Course of Defection from Reformation-purity once attained unto, and that she will not be reformed, tho' the ordinary Means have been used to reclaim her ; yea, I may add, she justifies herself in her Iniquities, and prosecutes and persecutes such as endeavour to witness against her Defections : Mr. Currie cannot refuse, that the ordinary Means have been used with the Judicatories to reclaim them, and that we have dealt with them by Petitions, Representations and Remonstrances, until they thrust some of us out from their Communion ; but Mr. Currie refuseth that the Judicatories are going on in a Course of Defection, he purgeth them of what he calls positive Backsliding, *Vind.* p. 32. and from going on in a Course of Defection, *Vind.* p. 74. The only Exception he makes is violent Intrusions ; and how he is consistent with himself in this, the Reader may see from what I have observed in the former Section. He charges me with Slander on my Mother-church, when I speak of Defections and Backslidings carried on in her Ecclesiastical Capacity, *Vind.* p. 45. I heartily wish there had been no Ground for such a Charge ; but both Mr. Currie and we have Ground to fear, that this whole Church and Land may feel the Weight of that awful Word of the Lord, *Jer.* 2. 35. *Yet thou sayest, Because I am inno-*

ent, surely his Anger shall turn from me : Behold, I will plead with thee, because thou sayest, I have not sinned. I endeavour to prove, *Def. Chap. 2.* that the present Judicatories are guilty of carrying on a Course of Defection from our Covenanted Doctrine, Order and Government agreeable to the Word of God ; and that this National Church, as she is represented in them, has not a just Claim to the Characters of a true Church, as they are laid in our first and other Reformed Confessions. I shall then briefly give a few Instances, to shew that Mr. Currie has not entered into the Argument as I have laid it ; and, for the Reader's Ease, I shall distinguish this Chapter into the following Sections.

S E C T. I.

Some Instances, shewing that Mr. Currie has not entered into the Argument for Secession, as it is stated upon the Head of Doctrine.

IN the 1st Section of the 2d Chapter of the *Defence*, I endeavour to prove, that this Church, as she is represented in her present Judicatories, has not the Scripture-character of the Church of the living God, 1 Tim. 3. 15. Mr. Currie is at Pains to give us the Popish and other Commentaries upon these Words, *the Pillar and Ground of Truth* ; but he does not, neither can he reasonably, controvert the ordinary and orthodox Protestant Commentary that I give upon them. My Argument upon this Head leans to my sixth general Observe upon Church-communion, *Def. p. 36* viz. " The publick Profession and Confession of the Truth of God, is one of the peculiar Characteristicks of the Church of the living God ; she is designed the Pillar and Ground of Truth, 1 Tim. 3. 15. that is, The Church is a publick Witness unto the Truth, a publick Keeper and Notifier of the Truth." Hence I observe, that the Church ought to bear *Testimony* and *Witness* in a particular and express Manner to these Truths that are controverted and opposed, and the Testimony ought to be in direct and express Opposition unto the Terms by which Truth is subverted ; this is a Debt that Zion owes to her God, to make a publick Confession of his Truths, *Psal. 147. 12.* And my Argument proceeds in the following manner : Every particular visible Church, which would evidence herself to be the Church of the living God, ought to support, maintain and uphold the Truth against all such Errors as may spring

up in that Church, whereby the Truth may be anywise pre-
judiced; she ought to publish, declare and confess the Truth
in such particular and distinct Terms, as every one may un-
derstand the Mind and Will of the Lord and Head of the
Church; when Error is vented, she ought to give a certain
and distinct Sound, that it may be known what is Truth,
and what is Error: But the present Judicatories of this Na-
tional Church have obstinately refused to publish and confess
the Truth, in the manner mentioned, in Opposition to the
many gross and pernicious Errors that have been vented a-
mongst us, and which have been brought to the Bar of the
Judicatories; therefore this National Church, as she is re-
presented in her present Judicatories, has not the Scripture-
character of the Church of the living God; or, she is not a
true Church, in the Sense of our Reformed Confessions. The
first Proposition of the above Argument I prove from the
Scriptures before quoted; as also from the Charge that is
given, and the Trust that is committed, to the Office-
bearers of the Church, *Acts* 20. 28, 29. *2 Tim.* 1. 13, 14.
I likewise argue from these Scriptures, That it is one of the
primary Ends and Designs of the Erection and Constitution
of a *visible Church* in this World, that the Lord Jesus may
be honoured and glorified, by a *particular, open and express*
Confession of his Name and Truths; and that the Commu-
nion of the Members of every particular visible Church
amongst themselves, is built upon their common or joint
Profession and Confession of the same Truths.

As for the 2d Proposition in my above Argument, That
this National Church, as represented in her present Judica-
tories, does not publish and confess the Truth, in Oppo-
sition to the many dangerous Errors which have been vented
amongst us; It is evident to me from her Conduct and Be-
haviour with respect to the several gross Errors that have
been before the Bar of her Judicatories; in regard the Er-
roneous have maintained and defended their gross and cor-
rupt Doctrines, as Truths agreeable to the Word of God,
and our Confession of Faith: And they have not only been
dismissed from the Bar, either with no Censure at all, or
without any Censure proportioned to the Scandal they have
given; but also, the Judicatories have never particularly
and expressly condemned their Errors, as contrary to the
Word of God, and our Confession of Faith. The first In-
stance I give, *Def.* p. 77. is in Mr. *Simson's* first Libel: And,
after I have given a particular Detail of some of the per-
nicious Doctrines maintained by Mr. *Simson* in his Answers

to the said Libel, I observe, That the Author of the *Essay* will be hard put to it, to prove that they are not everſive of the Foundation. I alſo obſerve, That however light ſome may make of them, yet, if they are ſeriously conſidered, it will plainly appear, that the whole System of Divine Truth, held forth from the Word of God in our Confeſſion of Faith, is ſubverted by them; and that it may be too juſtly ſaid that this Church is leavened by the foreſaid Doctrines, ſeeing theſe dangerous Errors have been brought to the Bar of our Aſſemblies once and again, and yet the Standard of a plain and particular Teſtimony has never been lifted up againſt them. Thus my Argument is laid in the *Defence*, from p. 76. to 89. and I might leave it to the unbiassed Reader, to look into Mr. *Currie's Vindication*, and to compare it with the *Defence*; and he will ſee with his own Eyes, that Mr. *Currie* has never once entred into the Argument, but everywhere ſhifts the ſame: And, to ſatisfy the Reader, I ſhall give a few Inſtances for Proof of what I have juſt now ſaid.

The firſt Inſtance I give is, *Vind.* p. 85. where Mr. *Currie* tells his Reader, " That the Aſſembly 1717 (as Mr. *Wilſon* owns, *Def.* p. 22.) diſcharged Mr. *Simſon* to vent or teach theſe Propoſitions, which were eſteemed to be erroneous; which (*ſays* Mr. *Currie*) all the World muſt own was condemning them in general, and interpretatively a condemning every one of them in particular." To which I reply, That I own no ſuch Thing as Mr. *Currie* reports; who, after his uſual Manner, quotes my Words unfairly, and tells not the one Half of what I ſay in the Place of my *Defence* above quoted, where I tell my Reader, that, in the Year 1726, " There was a flagrant Report, that Mr. *Simſon* continued to teach the ſame dangerous Errors for which he had formerly been under Proceſs, and which the Aſſembly 1717 had diſcharged him to vent and teach." In the above Words I ſpeak of the Report concerning Mr. *Simſon*, as it was ſpread at that Time; and in my Words immediately following, which Mr. *Currie* conceals, I deliver my own Judgment, where I add, " Tho', in the Act of the ſaid Aſſembly, the Prohibition is laid in very general Terms; and none of his dangerous Propoſitions, which were owned and maintained by himſelf in his Answer to the Libel exhibited againſt him, are either particularly condeſcended upon, or expreſſly condemned." This is what I own and aſſert, and which Mr. *Currie* does not make Answer unto. And the Truth is, the Prohibition

laid in such general Terms, that no Body can know what the particular Propositions are, which, it is alledged, tend to attribute too much to natural Reason, and the Power of corrupt Nature; and therefore this is far from being a plain Confessing the Truths of God, in Opposition unto the Injury that was done them by Mr. *Simson* in the Answers to his Libel. Mr. *Currie* adds, That "that Assembly expressly condemned Mr. *Simson*, as having used Expressions which tended to attribute too much to natural Reason, and the Power of corrupt Nature; which undue Advancing of Reason and Nature (says that Assembly) is always to the Disparagement of Revelation and efficacious free Grace: Which (says Mr. *Currie*) was a plain Condemning of his Errors, and a Testimony to the Truth, particularly to the Doctrine of free Grace, against the *Arminians*." But this was far from being a plain Condemning of Mr. *Simson's* Errors, for the Reason already given. It was likewise far from being a Testimony against the *Arminians*; for if we huddle up Matters in general with them, and if we do not enter into their particular Propositions, they will join with the Assembly in condemning such who attribute too much to natural Reason, or to the Power of corrupt Nature. I beg Leave to add one Observation further upon this Head, and it is this; I do not find that the Assembly 1717 have condemned Mr. *Simson* in the manner above-mentioned by Mr. *Currie*: The Act of the said Assembly runs in the following Terms; "Therefore, altho' Professor *Simson* does declare his Adherence to our Confession of Faith, and the Doctrines contained therein, as his Judgment, and disowns the Errors opposite thereto, wherewith he was charged; yet, considering, that by his printed Answers, &c. he hath given Offence, and that it is judged that therein he hath vented some Opinions not necessary to be taught in Divinity.—And, for answering more satisfyingly (as he supposeth) the Cavils and Objections of Adversaries, he hath adopted some Hypotheses different from what are commonly used among orthodox Divines, that are not evidently founded on Scripture, and tend to attribute too much to natural Reason, and the Power of corrupt Nature, &c." Now, what has the Assembly said? They have even said, 'Tis judged that Mr. *Simson* has done so and so; and, no doubt, some, yea many, did judge that Mr. *Simson* had vented himself in the above manner: But the Assembly have never said, that they themselves have either judged or found that Mr. *Simson* hath

hath adopted the Hypotheses mentioned. The Assembly's Manner of Dealing in such important and weighty Truths as were at that Time impugned or denied, viz. by a general Prohibition, and by such an ambiguous Judgment, left the Truths that were opposed lying wounded and bleeding in our Streets, without any suitable Testimony unto them.

Further likewise, in my above Argument, I observe, That Mr. *Simson's* dangerous Errors were brought to the Bar of our Assemblies once and again, first in the Years 1715, &c. and afterward in the Years 1727, &c. and that when the same pernicious and dangerous Scheme of Error was brought the second Time to the Bar of the Judicatories, and when the Assembly's Committee had found that Mr. *Simson* continued to teach his gross Errors; Is there any Testimony given at that Time to injured Truth? Have the Judicatories, either at that Time, or at any Time since, found, that the Truths of God, plainly held forth from the Word of God, in our Confession of Faith, were subverted by the foresaid Scheme? Does Mr. *Currie*, in his *Vindication*, make any Reply to this? Nay, he slips it over. And the Conduct of the Judicatories was yet more culpable, when it is considered, that Mr. *Simson*, in his Objections against and Answers unto the second Libel that was exhibited against him by the Assembly's Committee 1727, pleads in his own Defence, That the Propositions contained in the said Libel, and which were taken out of his own printed *Defences*, were none of them found by the Assembly 1717 to be contrary to the Word of God and our Confession of Faith. And as I humbly judge, from what I have observed above, he had Ground for this Plea; So, when the Assembly dismissed his Errors at that Time from their Bar, without any manner of Testimony against them, it is evident and plain, that this National Church, as she is represented in her present Judicatories, is not a confessing Church; that she is not the *Pillar and Ground of Truth*; and that she refuseth to give a certain and distinct Sound, whereby the Members of the Church may know what is Truth, and what is Error. It is but a mere Evasion, when Mr. *Currie* tells his Reader, *Vind.* p. 94. "I suppose (*says he*) "the Reason why our Assembly have passed Errors the "more easily, is, Because they saw it would not be easy to "overtake the whole of such or such Processes in the Time "of an Assembly." Observe, Reader, that Mr. *Currie*, for once, acknowledges what is Truth, viz. That Errors have been passed *more easily* by our General Assemblies. It is Matter of Reprete, that they have been so easily passed, As for

for the Reason assigned by Mr. Currie, viz. Because of the Shortness of the Time of their Meeting ; Mr. Currie knows very well, that the General Assembly 1720 did, in two Meetings of that Assembly, and after a Meeting of a Committee of the whole House, excerpt out of the Book called the *Marrow of Modern Divinity*, and condemn instantly, as erroneous, a greater Number of Propositions than these that are contained either in Mr. Simson's or Campbell's Processes: But I humbly judge that I have given the true Reason, in *Defence*, p. 81. why Mr. Simson and Mr. Campbell's Errors were more easily passed ; and it is this : " When an Act, assertory of the Truth, has been demanded ; Does not our Author very well know, that it has been argued in open Court, That we were not to add new Articles to our Confession of Faith ? And what could be meant by such Pleadings, but that our Confession does not determine particularly and expressly, in Opposition to many of the gross and hainous Errors that have been vented ? " This I offer in Reply to Mr. Currie's *Magisterial Assertion*, (*Essay*, p. 2.) " That it is unaccountable to charge the Church of Scotland as Favourers of Mr. Simson's Errors. " And Mr. Currie, tho' he endeavours to defend his above Assertion, yet he never attempts to take off the Force of my above Reply. And Mr. Currie might have known that this was the true Reason why Errors were more easily passed by our Judicatories, viz. It was alledged, That, if Mr. Simson's erroneous Propositions had been particularly and expressly condemned, we would thereby add new Articles to our Confession of Faith ; as if the said Errors had not been contrary to the Doctrine delivered in our Confession of Faith : And therefore every one is left to construct as they please concerning the Errors vented by Masters Simson and Campbell, whether they are agreeable to our Confession of Faith or not. The most that can be said of them, according to this Way of Reasoning, is, That they are doubtful Propositions, about which our Confession of Faith does not particularly or plainly determine ; which is in effect to betray and give up into the Hands of our Adversaries some necessary and important Truths plainly contained in our Confession. Mr. Currie's leading Argument against what I advance upon the Head of Doctrine, is, That we have a pure Confession of Faith ; consequently, that our Standards of Doctrine are pure ; and, that all the Ministers of this Church, and all such as are licensed as Probationers for the holy Ministry, are obliged to sign our Confession of Faith : And therefore he concludes,

That

That the present Judicatories, in their Ecclesiastical Capacity, maintain the true Doctrine, and profess the true Faith. But to this I reply, *Def. p. 78.* "Tho' the Standards of a Church for Doctrine were never so pure or perfect, yet, when Error is brought to her Bar and not condemned, she is justly charged with tolerating and allowing Error." I add; "It is evident, that tho' the Standards of a Church may be pure, yet, if Error is brought to the Bar of her Judicatories, and maintained as agreeable to her Standards, and the Church says nothing to the contrary; that every one who adopt such dangerous Principles, may reasonably judge in themselves, that the Church does not reckon the Errors they espouse to be contrary to her publick Standards. And this was the Case with Mr. *Simson*; he maintained, That the several Propositions that were owned and acknowledged by him, tho' of the above dangerous Nature and Tendency, were agreeable to the Word of God, and nowise contrary to our Confession of Faith. Hence it is plain, that, with respect to the Errors asserted and maintained by Mr. *Simson* in his first Process, our Confession of Faith can no more be reckoned a fixed Standard and Test of Orthodoxy and Soundness in the Faith, in Opposition to the said Errors, either in the Judicatories of the Church, or amongst such as are in Conjunction with them; in regard the *present Judicatories* have refused a Confession of their Faith, in Opposition to the above pernicious Errors, maintained at their Bar as agreeable to the Word of God, and nowise contrary to our said Confession of Faith; and consequently, they must be held as a *leavened Lump*, until the above-mentioned and other Errors are particularly and expressly condemned." The Evidence that is in my above Reasonings appears to me to be as clear as two and three make five: But, however evident my above Reasonings are, Mr. *Currie's* only Reply to them, *Vind. p. 86.* is, "That, if a Church command all her Ministers and Members to guard against teaching or preaching such Positions as are erroneous, that says very much against such Errors; and this, *says he*, as hath been shown just now, was the Case with respect to the Professor's first Libel, when it came before the Assembly 1717." But I have shown just now, that, by the general Prohibition that was given Mr. *Simson*, none of his Errors were particularly condemned; and likewise this general Prohibition did not, yea could not, point out to the Ministers or Members of this Church, such erroneous

Propositions as were maintained by Mr. *Simson*, and which it was their Duty to guard against. Mr. *Currie* adds, that "The present Judicatories profess their Adherence to our *Standards* in their true and genuine Meaning, as much as the *Brethren* or any else can do." I answer, The Brethren, in their *Judicial Act and Testimony*, have found and declared many Propositions, in the express Terms in which they are laid by Mr. *Simson* in his *Defences*, and by Mr. *Campbell* in his Writings, to be contrary to the Word of God and our Confession of Faith; and they have condemned them *as such*: And likewise, they have asserted the Truth, in direct Opposition to the Terms in which the above erroneous Propositions are expressed. But this the present Judicatories have never done; yea, tho' they have been dealt with for this Effect, yet they have obstinately refused to do it: Therefore the present Judicatories are very far from professing their Adherence to our Confession of Faith in its true and genuine Meaning, as the Seceding Brethren have done; nay, from their Conduct and Management in the doctrinal Errors that have been brought unto their Bar, the Members of this Church can never understand or know what the Judicatories reckon to be the true and genuine Sense and Meaning of our Confession of Faith in such weighty and important Points.

Mr. *Currie*, in his Reasonings upon the Head of Doctrine, repeats over and over again what he had said in his *Essay*, without ever considering the Answers I have given him in the *Defence*; as the Reader may see, if he pleases to compare my *Defence* and his *Vindication* together. I shall only take Notice of one Thing that Mr. *Currie* insists upon, and it is this; When I affirm in my *Defence*, That Masters *Simson* and *Campbell* maintained the several Propositions owned and acknowledged by them in their Writings, tho' of a dangerous Nature and Tendency, as agreeable to the Word of God, and nowise contrary to our Confession of Faith; (and this, I think, every one who understands the Controversy with the foresaid Persons, and who is not under the Power of Prejudice, will readily acknowledge; yet) Mr. *Currie* pleads, in his *Essay*, p. 115. That "Mr. *Simson* declared his Adherence to our Confession of Faith, and Doctrines therein-contained, and disowned the Errors opposite thereto wherewith he was charged." And, p. 121. That neither Mr. *Simson* nor Mr. *Campbell* offered to defend the erroneous Propositions as libelled, or in the Sense alleged against them." And he speaks to the same Pur-

pose, in his *Vind.* p. 93. And, when I tell my Reader, *Def.* p. 23. That Mr. *Simson* "never acknowledged that he
 "had taught any Thing contrary to the Word of God or
 "our Confession of Faith;" Mr. *Currie*, or *some others* for
 him, *Vind.* p. 87. gives me the following Answer; "His
 "Meaning was not, that his Expressions, in the Sense put
 "upon them, were not contrary to the Word of God and
 "our Confession; but that the Sense he had of them was
 "agreeable to both, even when taken in the true and plain
 "Sense which we put upon them." If the above Words
 have any Significancy or Meaning, it must be this; That
 erroneous Propositions were libelled against Mr. *Simson*: And
 tho' these Propositions were Errors when taken in the Sense
 libelled, and tho' the said Propositions were libelled in the
 ordinary Sense and Meaning that Men put upon Words; yet
 Mr. *Simson* was not found erroneous: Why? Because he had
 an orthodox Sense and Meaning of erroneous Propositions,
 when taken in the true and plain Sense that Men put upon
 Words. I confess, the above Assertion of Mr. *Currie* or his
 learned Friends is above my Comprehension, and appears to
 me to be as inconsistent and self-contradictory as the Doc-
 trine of the *Papists*, who teach that the holy Scriptures have
 a double and contrary Sense and Meaning. Truth will still
 be Truth, and Error will still be Error, while the World
 stands, whatever Sense or Meaning Men may pretend to
 give of an erroneous Proposition. And to tell the World,
 that a Proposition, which, in the common Sense that Men
 put upon Words, is erroneous, may likewise be Truth, is
 to impose upon the World, and has a native Tendency to
 introduce Scepticism in Religion, and consequently Atheism
 itself. To illustrate this Matter a little, I shall mention one
 of Mr. *Simson's* Propositions, and it lies in his first Letter to
 the Presbytery of *Glasgow*. Upon a Report, that he had
 said, when he read *Pictet* to his Students upon these Words,
Christus est summus Deus, that the Words are to be under-
 stood *cum grano salis*; the Professor's Reply to the above
 Report is, "Tho' I do not remember I then used this Ex-
 "pression, yet I think 'tis probable I might, because I often
 "use it on the like Occasions, namely, when a Term is not
 "to be taken in the greatest Latitude wherein 'tis used by
 "some Authors:" That is, The Title of the *most high God*
 is not applicable to the *Son*, when the Terms are taken in the
 greatest Latitude wherein they are used by some Authors.
 Do not then the Professor's above Words, when taken in the

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common Sense and Meaning that Men put upon Words, derogate from the true Deity and essential Glory of the Son of God? But, according to Mr. Currie's above Reasoning, the Sense which the Professor had of them was agreeable to the Word of God and our Confession, even when taken in the true and plain Sense which we put upon them. Mr. Currie might as well have said, that both Sides of a Contradiction are true: For, even when the Professor pretends to explain his above Expressions, he justifies, in the same Letter, his leading Fallacy, whereby he confounds the essential Perfections of God with the personal Properties of the Three adorable Persons of the Godhead; whereby the true Deity of the Son and Holy Ghost is subverted. And, as I observe, Def. p. 89. Mr. Simson in all his Declarations before the Assembly, and even in his Speech mentioned *Vind.* p. 90. did not make the least Acknowledgment that ever he had taught any Thing contrary to the Word of God and our Confession; tho', to use Mr. Currie's Words, it is as plain as Two and Three make Five, that he had, in his foresaid Letter, subverted the Doctrine of the holy Trinity, as it is laid down from the Word of God in our Confession of Faith. Mr. Currie, in the above Places of his *Essay* and *Vindication*, has purged Masters Simson and Campbell of Error; he has found them to be orthodox and sound: For, according to Mr. Currie, as above, "The Sense he had of the Propositions libelled against him (*viz.* Mr. Simson) was agreeable to the Word of God and our Confession, even when the Expressions were taken in the true and plain Sense which we put upon them." Yet he tells us, *Vind.* p. 85. That the Assembly 1717 condemned Mr. Simson's Errors; and, p. 94. That Errors had been more easily past, because such Processes could not be overtaken in the Time of an Assembly. I must own, that I have not read more inconsistent and self-contradictory Reasonings. Mr. Currie wishes, that there had been an Act assertory of the Truth, and a Warning against Errors; for my Part, I know not to what Purpose in the Cases mentioned. Surely, when Masters Campbell and Simson are orthodox and sound, when none of them defended their erroneous Propositions in the Sense alledged against them, and when they both explained their Propositions into a sound Sense and Meaning; there was no Need of such an assertory Act or Warning: All that was needful to be done is, an Act assertory of their Innocency and Freedom from Error; and this is what the Judicatories have indeed upon the Matter done.

Upon Mr. Currie's affirming that Masters *Simson* and *Campbell* did not offer to defend their erroneous Propositions in the Sense alledged against them, I make the following Observation, *Def.* p. 92. and I shall report it in my own Words, because they are never fairly nor fully reported by Mr. Currie. My Words are, "I hope it will be allowed that a Sense and Meaning, opposed to our received and approved Principles, was the Sense in which Masters *Simson's* and *Campbell's* Positions were libelled against them; and 'tis very evident that they have all along defended their Opinions in a Sense directly opposite to the received Principles of the Church of *Scotland*: Therefore, whatever Art they have used now and then in colouring their Errors with sly Distinctions, yet it must be owned by all who understand their Scheme, that they have defended their erroneous Positions as libelled, or *in the Sense alledged against them*: And, if our Author refuse this, let him give an Instance of such erroneous Propositions as Masters *Simson* and *Campbell* have explained into a sound Sense, and such as he will venture his own Character upon, that they are sound and orthodox; and, until he do this, I must either hold him as giving up the Question as he himself has stated it upon the Head of Doctrine, or that he has not understood their Principles." Unto this Mr. Currie makes the following Reply, *Vind.* p. 96. "As to Mr. *Wilson's* Demand of Instances, I might more justly require Instances of their defending these Errors, pleading, before our Judicatories, that they were Truths, and not Errors. For it is a received Maxim, *Affirmanti incumbit probatio*: And, until he adduce sufficient Proof that they defended such erroneous Opinions in a Sense opposite to the received Principles of this Church, Mr. *Wilson* may be esteemed guilty of slandering, not only these Professors, but also the Church of *Scotland*." And after Mr. Currie has made some trifling Diversions from the Argument, which I do not think worth while to notice, he adds; "After all, I might venture my Character upon it, that Professor *Simson* disown'd the Errors opposite to our Confession of Faith wherewith he was charged, and disown'd the unsound Sense put upon his Expressions by Adversaries, &c." Since Mr. Currie has demanded of me Instances that Masters *Simson* and *Campbell* have defended their Errors, and pled before the Judicatories that they were Truths, and not Errors; I shall not dispute it with him, to which of us the Proof belongs. And therefore I accept of

the Challenge he gives me ; and, in return to his Demand, I affirm, That the several erroneous Propositions which are condemned by the *Associate Presbytery* in their *Act and Testimony*, from p. 49. to 55. ly, in express Terms, in Mr. *Simson's* Answers to Mr. *Webster's* Libel ; and tho' they are gross Errors, yet they are maintained and defended by him, in the said Answers, as if they were Divine Truths agreeable to the Word of God and our Confession. And, if Mr. *Currie* would be satisfied in this, let him go and learn from the Committee of the General Assembly that met *Anno* 1727, and they will teach him, as to several of Mr. *Simson's* Propositions condemned by the *Associate Presbytery*, that they were nowise agreeable to the Word of God, or our Confession of Faith : And I affirm, as to all of the Propositions condemned by the said Presbytery, that they are gross Errors, subversive of that Scheme of Doctrine held forth from the Word of God in our *Confession* ; and yet they have never been particularly nor expressly condemned by the Judicatories of this established Church ; whereby the Edge of Divine Truth, as it is held forth from the Word of God in our *Confession*, has never been laid against these pernicious Errors.

With respect to Mr. *Campbell*, I affirm in like manner, That his several Propositions condemned by the *Associate Presbytery*, from p. 59. to 75. were maintained and defended by him, in his Books and Writings, as Truths, agreeable to the Word of God and our Confession ; and that the said Presbytery have, upon the weighty Grounds and Reasons mentioned in their Act, found them to be contrary to the Word of God, and *Confession of Faith*. I mention some of Mr. *Campbell's* Propositions, *Def.* p. 80. where I desire Mr. *Currie* to try if he can reconcile them with what he himself acknowledges to be a fundamental Truth, *viz.* That our Justification is only by the Surety's imputed Righteousness. To which he replies, *Vind.* p. 88. " I never offered to vindicate " any of Mr. *Campbell's* Positions, more than did the Bre- " thren." But, did ever any of the Brethren affirm that Mr. *Campbell* had given sound Explications of his erroneous Propositions ? And this is what Mr. *Currie* still affirms ; and therefore Mr. *Currie* has vindicated his Positions, more than any of the Brethren ever did. Mr. *Currie* adds, That, " the " Ground of Complaint against the General Assembly was, " That she dismissed Mr. *Campbell's* Process without censu- " ring him." But Mr. *Currie* might have known that this was not the only Ground of Complaint, but that it was like-
wise

wife complained, that the Judicatories dismissed Mr. Campbell's Errors, without any Libel exhibited against him, and without ever condemning any of his Errors, as contrary to the Word of God and our *Confession of Faith*. Mr. Currie further adds, "I told, the Assembly dismissed his Process, because of the sound Explications which he gave of the Positions drawn up against him." But, if Mr. Currie had not shifted the Argument, he should have told his Reader how the Propositions condescended upon, *Def.* p. 80. can be reconciled with what he himself acknowledges to be a fundamental Truth. As for Mr. Campbell's Position concerning *Self-love*, and the Explication that he gave of the same; Mr. Currie says, he is far from vindicating the said Position, or the Assembly's Conduct in not giving Testimony against it. Here, again, Mr. Currie is inconsistent with himself, when he would have his Reader believe that Mr. Campbell never offered to defend his erroneous Propositions in the Sense alledged against him, *Essay*, p. 12. and yet says, he is far from vindicating Mr. Campbell's Doctrine about *Self-love*, or the Assembly's Conduct in not giving Testimony against it. As for the Apology he makes for the Assembly's Conduct in adopting Mr. Campbell's Principle concerning *Self-love*, I refer the Reader to what I have said, *Def.* p. 93, 94. to which Mr. Currie does not pretend to make any Answer. With respect to Mr. Simson's Errors upon the Doctrine of the holy Trinity; Since Mr. Currie has thought fit to venture his Character upon it, that Professor Simson disown'd the Errors, opposite to our *Confession of Faith*, wherewith he was charged; I shall give him the Judgment of one who bears as great a Character as Mr. Currie himself; and that is, the Reverend Author of the Paper, intituled, *An Enquiry into Mr. Simson's Sentiments about the Trinity, from his Papers in Process*; who observes concerning Mr. Simson's Declarations, *Pref.* p. 9. "In Words they may bear a sound Sense, but in my Opinion, says he, are very little to be regarded, while he understands them in a Sense consistent with his former Papers, and does not ingenuously retract his Arian Tenets therein vented." The Author of the said *Enquiry* gives his Judgment, as above, after all the Declarations Mr. Simson had made, and after his Speech before the Assembly 1729. I directed Mr. Currie to the *Enquiry* once and again, as *Def.* p. 25, 89. but he slips it over, as he does almost every Argument that I advance upon this Subject. Since Mr. Currie has so very inconsiderately ventured his Character upon it, that Mr. Simson disowned the Errors opposite to our

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Confession of Faith, wherewith he was charged ; let him go to the Reverend the *Principal* of the New College of *St. Andrews*, and he will teach him, in his learned *Enquiry*, that it is evident from Mr. *Simson's* own Papers, that he maintained *Arian* Principles and Tenets : And, if Mr. *Currie* will acquiesce in the Judgment and Reasonings of this learned Man, he will see that Mr. *Simson* never made an *ingenuous Retraction* of his *Arian* Tenets.

To conclude this Head : After all that Mr. *Currie* has advanced, first in his *Essay*, and now in his *Vindication* ; my Argument for Secession, as it is stated on the Head of Doctrine, stands good : Namely, Gross Errors, yea, such Errors as subvert the Foundations, and overthrow that Scheme of sound Doctrine held forth from the Word of God in our Confession of Faith, have been vented among us ; and they have been brought to the Bar of the Judicatories, in the several Processes against Masters *Simson* and *Campbell*, and the said Broachers and Teachers of these gross and pernicious Errors have maintained and defended the same at their Bar, as Truths agreeable to the Word of God and our Confession of Faith ; but the present Judicatories of this National Church have never to this Day condemned particularly and expressly these Errors that have been brought to their Bar ; they have never laid the Edge of Divine Truth, as it is held forth from the Word of God in our Confession of Faith, against such pernicious Errors ; nor has any adequate Censure been inflicted upon the Broachers and Spreaders of these dangerous and gross Errors : Therefore this National Church, in her Ecclesiastical Capacity, is not the *Pillar and Ground* of Truth ; that is, she does not maintain and uphold, publish and declare the Truths of God, especially such as have been opposed and denied ; and consequently, she has not the Scripture-character of the *Church of the living God*, nor that Character of a *true Church* given in the several Confessions of the Reformed Churches, and in our first *Confession of Faith*, Art. 18. and which, according to Mr. *Currie's* Quotation from Mr. *Gillespie*, (*Essay*, p. 3.) is given by all Protestant orthodox Writers, as one, yea, as the principal Mark of a *true visible Church* ; namely, the Maintenance and Profession of the true Doctrine and the true Faith. And tho' it should be alledged that there are Ministers in the present established Church, who are orthodox and sound in their Principles, and who preach sound Doctrine ; yet the Ecclesiastical Body of which they are Members do not confess the Truths of Christ in Opposition to the Injuries that have been done

done them : Yea, they refuse to do it, notwithstanding the Petitions and Remonstrances for that End. And tho' the present Judicatories profess their Adherence to our *Confession of Faith*, yet, if their Conduct and Management with respect to the many weighty and important Truths that have been pleaded for Justice at their Bar, against the Violence done them by Adversaries, is duly considered, our *Confession of Faith* is of no Significancy in the present Judicatories as an *Ecclesiastical Body* ; it does not distinguish between Truth and Error, it gives no certain and distinct Sound, it is upon the Matter abandoned and given up by the Judicatories as a Test and Standard of Soundness in the Faith.

Ah ! how does *Truth* ly wounded and bleeding in our Streets ! the present Judicatories have looked on, they have refused to assert the Rights of injured *Truth*, they regard not her Cries ; she has been left, for them, to become a Prey to such as waste and spoil her, and to breathe out her last amongst their treacherous Hands : Tho' she has looked ruefully about her, crying for Help, and pleading for Justice from the Courts of *Zion* ; yet the Ecclesiastical Courts of *Scotland* have refused to take her by the Hand, by making a free, plain and particular Confession of Truth, in Opposition to the Violence her Spoilers have done her. Therefore, and for all the above Reasons, it is the Duty of all the Lovers of Truth, to make a free, open and plain Confession thereof ; and particularly, it is the Duty of the Office-bearers of the Church, tho' they should be few in Number, and tho' they should be born down by a *Majority*, to lift up the Standard of a judicial Testimony for such Truths as are opposed, controverted or denied ; and, in this Case, they may rest in Faith and Hope, that He, upon whose Shoulders the Government is laid, *shall build the Temple of the Lord, and bear all the Glory.*

S E C T. II.

Concerning the Tyranny of the present Judicatories in the Administration of Government and Discipline ; and particularly, the tyrannical Sentences past by the late pretended Assemblies against the Seceding Ministers.

THE Argument for Secession from the present Judicatories is stated, *Def. p. 100. Chap. 2. Sect. 2.* upon their Tyranny in the Administration, whereby they have

have forfeited the Claim to another Mark of a *true Church* given in our Reformed Confessions, particularly in our first Confession, *Art. 18. viz. The upright Administration or Exercise of Church-discipline as God's Word prescribeth.* Mr. Currie tells, That he has no Controversy with me upon what I say in this Section, till he come to the Middle of Page 104. only, *Vind. p. 106.* he has no fewer than three Charges against me, before he come that Length, which I must remove out of the Way, because some of them are turned over and over again in his *Vindication.* The first Charge he brings against me is of Self-contradiction; and wherein? He tells me, that, *Def. p. 101.* I affirm, That the Nomination or Designation of the Office-bearers of the Church, unto their several Offices, belongs unto the whole Church. And this is indeed what I affirm. Mr. Currie reckons that I contradict myself. Why? Because, *says he,* I plead, *Def. p. 311.* That it is no Robbing of the Peoples Right to give this Nomination to the Eldership. I answer, This is not the Thing I plead in the Place directed unto: But Mr. Currie having alledged in his *Essay,* That the Directory 1649, for the Calling of Ministers, doth rob the People of their Right to elect their Pastors, so far, that they had not the Choice of any of the Persons to be upon the Leet for Ministers; in regard, by that Act, the Elders had both the Nomination and the Election; I replied to Mr. Currie's above Words, in the Place of the *Defence* above quoted, "Our Author cannot refuse that the People had a Negative over their Elders by the *Directory* 1649; and, if so, then 'tis plain the People were so far from being robbed of their Right to choose their own Ministers, that the Session could not impose a Minister upon them if the Majority of the Congregation dissented; especially when 'tis considered, that according to the *Directory,* when the said Majority dissented, they were no more obliged to give their Reasons for their Dissent than the Session for their Election, as Mr. Currie pleads in his *Jus Populi,* p. 125, 126." The judicious Reader may judge for himself, if there is any Thing in my above Words that contradicts what I have affirm'd, namely, That the Nomination of Office-bearers belongs to the whole Church. And, that I may not return again to the Question betwixt Mr. Currie and me about the foresaid *Directory,* that which I plead in the *Defence* is, That the *Directory* 1649 robs not the People of their Right to elect their own Pastors; and that the *Directory,* if it is understood in its plain and genuine Sense, does upon the Matter grant that the

Right of Election and Nomination of Ministers is originally and radically in the *collective Church*. Hence, when Mr. Currie tells his Reader, *Essay*, p. 147. "Tho' the People had a *Negative* upon the Elders; yet they might never have the Person whom they most inclined to have, if but Four of Seven, Five of Nine, &c. should be against the whole Parish:" I make the following Reply, *Def.* p. 313. "Our Author misrepresents the *Directory*, when he affirms, that, according to it, the People might never have the Person they most inclined to have; for, from the *Negative* which Mr. Currie in his *Full Vindication* proves to be given the People over the Session, it rather follows, that the Elders or Session can never have the Man they most incline to have; yea, it follows, that they can never choose any, with Hopes of having him settled to be their Minister, but the Man whom the Majority of the Congregation incline to have." Tho' Mr. Currie thinks fit to spend four Pages, *Vind.* p. 303, &c. in arguing against my Reasonings upon the Head of the *Directory*, yet he makes no Reply to what I say above: And when Mr. Currie is pleased, *Vind.* p. 306. to tell the World, that the *Directory* 1649 "was as plain a Robbing of the People of the Right to nominate and elect their Pastors, as was the Act 1732;" I shall only return him one of his own little *Latin Phrases* which he makes use of in this Place, He may draw *quidlibet ex quolibet*, i. e. *He may say any Thing after this.*

Another Charge Mr. Currie lays against me is, That, when I say the Nomination of Office-bearers belongs unto the whole Church, 'tis probable I mean Men and Women equally. Mr. Currie frequently harps upon this in his *Vindication* as p. 14. And in his Remarks upon our Testimony, *Essay* p. 200. he has a great many Queries with respect to such as have a Right to call Ministers: For my Part, I reckon not them such trifling Questions, being so little to the Purpose in the present Dispute betwixt him and me, that I did not think it worth my while to take notice of them. I thought it sufficient when I told him, *Def.* p. 314. That I do not see any Difference betwixt him and the Associate Presbytery upon this Head; and here I meant his Principles as they are professed in his *Jus Populi Divinum*: But he repeats his Questions in his *Vindication*, and he reckons them to be such puzzling Questions, *Vind.* p. 306. that I do not incline to answer them. His Questions are, Whether every Male or Female, whether every Elder and other Persons in the Congregation, are to have an equal Voice in settling of Ministers

thers? &c. These, and some other Questions to this Purpose, concerning the Principle of the Associate Presbytery about the Calling of Ministers, as it is laid down *Aet and Testimony*, p. 100. Mr. Currie alledges are very puzzling unto them: But, as I have no Difficulty for my own Part about his Questions, nor yet any of my Brethren, so far as I know; so I humbly judge I may give him this short Answer to all his Questions, viz. That the daily and uniform Practice of the Associate Presbytery, about the Calling of Ministers, leaves not the World in the Dark concerning their Principle as 'tis plainly declared in their *Aet and Testimony*. They have had Calls from several Places laid before them, such as, from *Morbattle, Stitchell, Stow, Lintoun, Kilmauers, Balfron*, the Associate Congregations at *Edinburgh, Glasgow* and about *Linlithgow*; one or moe Ministers of the *Associate Presbytery* have presided, by their Appointment and Direction, in the Election of Ministers to the several Places above-mentioned; likewise, the Election at the said Places was not made in a Corner, but openly and in the Face of the Sun: And Mr. Currie's Intelligence of what's done in the Country is not so very lame, but he may tell it in the next Book that he writes, if the *Associate Presbytery* have sustained *Females* as Electors, or whether they have given the *Elders* only a decisive Voice, and the *People* only the Liberty of consenting. I hope the Reader will excuse me, when I have traced Mr. Currie for once in a Matter which (to say no worse of it) is, as he frequently speaks, Carping for Carping's sake, or Quarrelling for Quarrelling's sake.

But, before I come to the Question with Mr. Currie concerning the Tyranny of the present Judicatories in the Administration, there is yet a third Quarrel that Mr. Currie has with me, and that is, That I have neglected to take Notice of what he delivers in his *Essay*, concerning the Obedience and Subjection that is due to the Sentences of Church-judicatories. The Reader may observe, that I introduce this Section in the *Defence*, concerning Tyranny, with a short Account of our Presbyterian Principles upon the Head of Government and Discipline: And, amongst other Things, I thought it sufficient to notice, that the Power and Authority that we give unto Ecclesiastical Courts is more than a mere consultative Power; and that the Courts of Christ's Spiritual Kingdom have an authoritative Power; otherwise, *I say*, the Authority of the King of Zion is not represented or manifested in them: Then I give some particular Instances, to shew the Absurdity of the Principles of such who give

only a *consultative* Power to the Courts of Zion. I also mention some Cases, wherein a Power of *Authority* may and ought to be exercised by Ecclesiastical Courts; and I give only a few Instances, not intending to insist further upon this Subject, because I judged it not needful in the present Dispute. I observed likewise, that the Power of Ecclesiastical Courts is not a lordly, magisterial and legislative Power; but a limited, ministerial and stewardly Power and Authority. But that which Mr. Currie complains I have neglected to notice is, that he had told in his *Essay*, p. 167. "That, no Regard was to be had to the Determination of a Judicatory, unless it be right and just in our own Eyes, then it will not be easy to shew what more Power is given to superior Judicatories by Presbyterians, than is given by Independents; For, *says he*, they own that Synods are necessary to the Well-being of Churches." Mr. Currie adds, That I have omitted to notice what Power (*he says*) Independents give to Synods in their Confession of Faith, *Mr. Rutherford's History of New-England*, Book 3. p. 57. Mr. Currie transcribes the Words of that Confession, *Vind.* p. 106. to which I answer, The Associate Presbytery have declared their Principles concerning that Obedience and Subjection that is due unto Ecclesiastical Synods, in the express Words of our *Westminster Confession of Faith, Act and Testimony* p. 99. and I reckon I have no Concern with the *New-England Confession* further than as it agrees in that Article with our own Confession, Chap. 31. Art. 3. He tells me likewise That I have not made the least Reply to what he cited from the *Apologetical Relation*, *Masters Webster and Durham*, from the Practice of Mr. *Rutherford* when he went to *Aberdeen* and he adds, in his *Vindication*, *Carterwright and Apollonius*. I answer, I have no Occasion to make the least Reply to any of his Quorations, and that because I know no other Power that any of the Authors he mentions give unto Synods, than that which our Confession of Faith grants them; and this is what I and what all the Associate Presbytery do acknowledge. As for Mr. *Rutherford's* Practice in going to *Aberdeen*, he went in Obedience to a Sentence of the High Commission Court; and, if Mr. Currie will have the High Commission to have been either a Synod or an Ecclesiastical Court, I believe he is the first of the Presbyterian Denomination that has acknowledged it as such.

Mr. Currie, upon this Head of the Power of Judicatories affirms, "That I have said nothing in Answer to his about Authors, more than the Brethren did, in their *Review*"

"wh

" what was said in the Commission's *Narrative* to the same
 " Purpose, in the Case of Mr. *Erskine's* Protestation against
 " the Assembly *May 14th 1733.*" But Mr. *Currie* might
 have known, that the Argument of the *Narrative-writers*, for
 Subjection to unjust Sentences, wherein the publick Cause
 of God and a Testimony for Truth is concerned, is conside-
 red in all the Force and Strength in which the Commission's
 Committee did dress it up, and likewise fully answered in
 the *Review*, particularly from Page 48th to 62d, to which
 I refer Mr. *Currie*; and there he will find, that the Brethren
 have proven, that when Sentences are pass'd by Ecclesiastical
 Courts, which prejudice the publick Cause of God and a
 Testimony for Truth, that in this Case Obedience to such
 Sentences, or a silent Submission unto them, is a Departing
 from a Testimony for Truth, and a Giving-up with the
 Cause of God. Mr. *Currie* may likewise see from the *Re-
 view*, that the Protestant Principle, concerning that Judg-
 ment of Discretion which belongs to all the Members of the
 Church, does not introduce the licentious Principle above-
 mentioned by Mr. *Currie*, viz. *That no Regard is to be had to
 the Determination of a Judicatory, unless it be right and just
 in our own Eyes*; And therefore I refer Mr. *Currie* to the *Re-
 view* upon this Head likewise; and I wish, that before he
 tell his Reader again, in his random Manner, that the Bre-
 thren have said nothing upon this Head in Answer to the
Narrative, that he would first consider and answer what they
 have said in the Place I have directed him unto. The *Nar-
 rative-writers* have hitherto been silent in their own Cause,
 it seems they have now got Mr. *Currie* to take up his Pen in
 their Defence: I doubt not but they will make their Ac-
 knowledgments to him for the Service he has done them;
 but, in the mean Time, they have led him into the same
 Ditch into which they themselves have fallen: For I find
 that Mr. *Currie* is not satisfied that he has said enough in this
 Place upon the Head of Subjection to Church-judicatories;
 and therefore he returns again to the Argument, perhaps at
 the Direction of the *Narrative-writers*, Vind. p. 339. where
 he affirms, " That, if Church-judicatories have any Power
 " above or beyond that which is only consultative, it must
 " at least be this, *That their Sentences are to be submitted
 " unto, tho' we cannot see the Equity of them.*" I own, that
 in private and personal Causes, or in Causes that only concern
 one's self, the Sentences of Church-judicatories are to be
 submitted unto, tho' we do not see the Equity of them; but
 in Matters of publick Concern, wherein the Cause of God

and a publick Testimony for Truth are concerned, to assert that in this Case the Sentences of Church-judicatories are to be submitted unto, tho' we do not see the Equity of them, I affirm that it is an Anti-reformation Principle, and that hereby a blind implicate Obedience to the Sentences of Church-judicatories is established; for, according to Mr. Currie, as his above Proposition is laid, tho' the Sentences of the Church-judicatory should affect the publick Cause of God, the Cause must be given up to the arbitrary Will and Pleasure of Men, at least we must give a silent Submission unto them, *when we cannot see the Equity of such Sentences.* It does not help Mr. Currie out of the Mire, when he acknowledges in the same Place, that the Determinations of Church-judicatories, tho' of General Assemblies, are never to be received, so as to give the least positive Obedience unto them, unless they be consonant to God's Word, and consonant unto it in our Esteem; I say, this does not help him out of the Mire, when he adds, "Yer unless we are to submit unto them, so as not to act against nor in Opposition unto them; I cannot see an Hair's-breadth of Difference in the Principle of Presbyterians from that which is the Principle of Independents in this Particular, which (Mr. Currie adds) I take to be the main Thing in Controversy with them." I shall be far from saying, that Mr. Currie has not understood the Controversy betwixt Presbyterians and Independents in this Particular; but I will venture to say, That 'tis a Reproach upon our Presbyterian Principles, when he affirms, that, according to the said Principles, we must submit to Church-judicatories, *so as not to act against or in Opposition unto them;* When this is maintained without the above Limitation or Restriction, as Mr. Currie does, then 'tis evident and plain we must be silent, we must not act against them, nor oppose them, tho' they should bear down the Cause of Christ. When it is considered, that, in Causes merely private and personal, the Sentences of Church-judicatories are to be submitted unto, tho' we cannot see the Equity of them, it is plain that every Man's private Judgment is not made the *last Resort*; and, if Mr. Currie had noticed this, he might have spared his Boast of a "Farewel all Use of Church-judicatories, except it be for Counsel or Advice." But if in the publick Cause of God, wherein the declarative Honour and Glory of the Redeemer, and wherein a Testimony for Reformation-principles once attained unto, are concerned; if (I say) in this Case Mr. Currie is pleased with a silent Submission unto the Sentences

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of the Church, when he gives not an active or positive Obedience unto them, the Cause of Truth is betrayed, and a Testimony for Truth is given up. If Mr. *Currie* thinks that, in the Case above-mentioned, we are so far to submit to the Judicatories as not to act against them or in Opposition unto them, he cannot but know, that if *Luther* and our other Reformers had set out upon this Principle, if they had not acted against and in Opposition unto the Sentences of Ecclesiastical Courts in their Time, the Reformation would have been choked in the Bud, and we might to this Day have been groaning under Antichristian Tyranny and Bondage.

I have diverted too long from my present Enquiry, which is, Whether or not Mr. *Currie* has entered into my Argument as I have laid it, concerning the Tyranny of the present Judicatories in their Administration of Government and Discipline, whereby they have forfeited their Claim to one of the Characters of a true Church, given in our Reformed Confessions of Faith? And, for Proof of this, in the Section of the *Defence* above-mentioned, I give several particular Instances of that Tyranny in the Administration which takes Place in the present Judicatories.

The first Instance I give is, A continued Series and Tract of violent Settlements for above Twenty Years bypast, whereby Ministers have been intruded upon dissenting and reclaiming Congregations, either upon the Footing of Presentations in consequence of the Act restoring Patronages, or upon the Footing of the Act of Assembly 1732, which, tho' now repealed, has been put in Practice by the Judicatories both before and since that Time. The present Judicatories, by their above Conduct and Management, exercise a lordly Dominion over the Heritage of God; they rob and spoil them of their just Rights and Privileges, and break and scatter them in all Corners of the Land.

I observed in the *Defence*, That Mr. *Currie* owns, that the Charge of violent Intrusions is what the Judicatories can least be vindicated from: But he tells his Reader, *Essay*, p. 30. "That, as there hath been a considerable Struggle made by many Ministers of this Church against them, a considerable Stop hath been put to them for *some Time* bygone; so, whatever Ground there is for Lamentation, there is no sufficient Ground for Separation from the Church of *Scotland*, notwithstanding of such Intrusions." Upon the first Part of his above Words I make the following Observations, *Def.* p. 105, 106. "It is true, that both Ministers and many other Church-members have made a

“ considerable Struggle against Intrusions, as appears from
 “ the *Narrative* I have given in the *Introduction*; but then,
 “ such as are Strangers to Affairs amongst us in *Scotland*,
 “ and who read the above Words of our Author, may
 “ readily apprehend that the Struggles he mentions have
 “ had such desirable Success, that the present Judicatories
 “ are repenting and reforming that Course of Violence
 “ which they have practised against the Lord’s Heritage
 “ and Flock in *Scotland*: But I appeal to our *Author* him-
 “ self, if he can honestly say that the Judicatories are either
 “ repenting or reforming their Violence. Whether our
 “ Author’s Word may be reckoned an extenuating of the
 “ Sin of the Judicatories, or whether or not, as they are
 “ laid, they have an evident Tendency to impose upon the
 “ World, I leave it to the Reader, who knows the State
 “ of Matters with us in *Scotland*, to judge for himself.”

Mr. *Currie* replies to my above Reasonings, *Vind.* p. 109,
 in the following Manner; “ Mr. *Wilson* carps, because I
 “ have said, A considerable Struggle has been made by many
 “ Ministers in this Church against violent Intrusions.” But
 my Words bear no such Thing as carping at what he says
 concerning these Struggles; I grant that *it is true*, that con-
 siderable Struggles have been made. Mr. *Currie* adds, Yet
 Mr. *Wilson* asks, *What Success have they had?* But I ask no
 such Question. If Mr. *Currie* had not perverted my Words,
 or shifted the Argument, he ought to have told that the
 Question I asked him is, Whether or not he can honestly say,
 that the Judicatories are either repenting or reforming their
 Violence? But Mr. *Currie*, according to his usual Way of
 Dealing, sets his Thumb upon this, and palms upon me a
 Question which, in the Manner ’tis reported by Mr. *Currie*,
 my Words give not the least Ground for. If Mr. *Currie* had
 spoke to the Purpose, he should have told his Reader, that
 my Words gave Ground for the following Question, *viz.*
 Have the Struggles of Ministers and many other Church-
 members had such desirable Success, that the present Judia-
 catories are repenting and reforming that Course of Violence
 they have practised against the Lord’s Heritage and Flock
 in *Scotland*? But it was not safe for Mr. *Currie* to state the
 Question after this Manner, for he would have found con-
 siderable Difficulty in the answering of it. When I tell
 Mr. *Currie*, that his Words, *a considerable Stop hath been put*
 to violent Intrusions for some Time bygone, if they are not
 an extenuating of the Sin of the Judicatories, they have an
 evident Tendency to impose upon the World; Mr. *Currie*

replies,

replies, That, if his Words have such a Tendency, he has not been singular: For the Reverend Mr. *Willison* saith so, in his Appendix to his Sermon 1734; also Mr. *Ebenezer Erskine*, yea, Mr. *Wilson* himself, tho' (*says he*) it seems his Memory has failed him; and likewise the Brethren in their *Reasons of Not-acceding*, they all say so. But Mr. *Currie* is very much mistaken; for none of the Brethren he mentions says what he alledges. They indeed acknowledge, that the Assembly 1734 did put a Stop to the violent Proceedings of some former Assemblies; but none of them say, that a considerable Stop has been put *for some Time bygone* (*viz.* since the Year 1733) to violent Intrusions. Mr. *Currie* may know, that he published his *Essay* a short Time before the Meeting of the Assembly 1738; he also knows, that three Assemblies intervened betwixt the Assembly 1734 and the foresaid Assembly; and, if Mr. *Currie's* Memory had not failed him, he might have known, that I have upon good Grounds affirmed, That the several Assemblies after the Year 1734 have returned to the Practice of countenancing and supporting violent Settlements; and, if Mr. *Currie* will suffer himself to see it, he cannot but know, that they continue in the same tyrannical Course and Practice to this very Day: Therefore I speak the Truth, and am very consistent with myself, when I tell Mr. *Currie*, That his Words have an evident Tendency to impose upon the World, or, that they may be reckoned an extenuating the Sin of the Judicatories, when he tells his Reader, that a *considerable Stop* has been put to violent Intrusions *for some Time bygone*. If Mr. *Currie* reckons this a Thrust at his Character, I wish that for the Time to come he may have so much Regard to his own Character, as to be more cautious in his Assertions; but, when he calls my Words a *designed Thrust* at his Character, I shall leave this amongst the rest of his uncharitable Heart-judgings.

As I reckon Intrusions, or the violent Settlement of Ministers, a high Act of Tyranny in the Administration; so, that which I insist upon in my Argument is, That the present Judicatories are not only guilty of Tyranny in this Matter in one or two particular Instances; but that they are guilty of an habitual Tract of Tyranny over the Heritage of God in *Scotland*, in the Settlement of Ministers, for above Twenty Years past. That the Settlement of Ministers is an Act of Tyranny, I prove, *Def. p. 107.* from Mr. *Currie's Jus Pop. Div. Pref. p. 4.* where he gives it as a Reformation-principle from *Calvin* and *Calderwood*, That it is an impious

Robbing of the Church, Rapine and Sacrilege, to settle any Minister whether the People consent or not. Upon this Head Mr. Currie tells me, *Vind.* p. 111. "That he is as much for the Peoples Right this Day as ever, tho' he cannot see that there is any such Tyranny in the Church of Scotland as obliges People to separate from her." He goes on in the same Place to purge the present Judicatories of habitual Tyranny in this particular Instance; "For, says Mr. Currie, albeit I own it is to be lamented there have been any violent Settlements in the Church of Scotland since the Act restoring Patronages, yet she is not habitually guilty of Acts of Oppression in this Matter." He goes on p. 113. and tells his Reader, "That Mr. Wilson has not cited one Sentence from any of his Writings from which he can justly infer that our present Judicatories are habitually guilty of violent Intrusions." To all which I reply, That I never alledged that Mr. Currie calls violent Intrusions by the Name of Tyranny; neither did I ever alledge, that he owns that the Church of Scotland is habitually guilty of Tyranny in this Particular; for I know that he affirms the contrary in his *Essay*, as he does in the above Words of his present *Vindication*: But that which I say is, That, if Mr. Currie refuses to own that violent Settlements are Acts of Tyranny, he is inconsistent with himself, or, he eats in what he had said in his *Jus Pop. Div.* viz. That it is impious Robbery, Rapine and Sacrilege, to settle a Minister whether the People will or not. And, when Mr. Currie purges the present Judicatories of habitual Tyranny in this Matter, it is in vain to deal with such a Man by Argument or Reason; his confident Assertion flies in the Face of open and manifest Fact: 'Tis as clear as Day-light, that if violent Settlements are *impious Robbery, Sacrilege and Rapine*, that then the present Judicatories are habitually guilty in this Matter of Tyranny in the Administration. Mr. Currie may blindfold or amuse Strangers, who know not our present Circumstances in Scotland, when he tells them in his Books, That a *considerable Stop* has been put for *some Time bygone* to violent Settlements, and that the present Judicatories are not guilty of habitual Tyranny in this Matter; but, I am sure, all in Scotland who reckon that the Settlement of Ministers over dissenting and reclaiming Congregations is contrary to the Word of God, and that Liberty where-with Christ has made his People free; such, I say, cannot but judge that the present Judicatories are guilty of habitual Tyranny and Oppression in all the Corners of this Church

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Robbing of the Church, Rapine and Sacrilege, to settle any Minister whether the People consent or not. Upon this Head Mr. Currie tells me, *Vind.* p. 111. "That he is as much for the Peoples Right this Day as ever, tho' he cannot see that there is any such Tyranny in the Church of Scotland as obliges People to separate from her." He goes on in the same Place to purge the present Judicatories of habitual Tyranny in this particular Instance; "For, says Mr. Currie, albeit I own it is to be lamented there have been any violent Settlements in the Church of Scotland since the Act restoring Patronages, yet she is not habitually guilty of Acts of Oppression in this Matter." He goes on p. 113. and tells his Reader, "That Mr. Wilson has not cited one Sentence from any of his Writings from which he can justly infer that our present Judicatories are habitually guilty of violent Intrusions." To all which I reply, That I never alledged that Mr. Currie calls violent Intrusions by the Name of Tyranny; neither did I ever alledge, that he owns that the Church of Scotland is habitually guilty of Tyranny in this Particular; for I know that he affirms the contrary in his *Essay*, as he does in the above Words of his present *Vindication*: But that which I say is, That, if Mr. Currie refuses to own that violent Settlements are Acts of Tyranny, he is inconsistent with himself, or, he eats in what he had said in his *Jus Pop. Div.* viz. That it is impious Robbery, Rapine and Sacrilege, to settle a Minister whether the People will or not. And, when Mr. Currie purges the present Judicatories of habitual Tyranny in this Matter, it is in vain to deal with such a Man by Argument or Reason; his confident Assertion flies in the Face of open and manifest Fact: 'Tis as clear as Day-light, that if violent Settlements are impious Robbery, Sacrilege and Rapine, that then the present Judicatories are habitually guilty in this Matter of Tyranny in the Administration. Mr. Currie may blindfold or amuse Strangers, who know not our present Circumstances in Scotland, when he tells them in his Books, That a considerable Stop has been put for some Time bygone to violent Settlements, and that the present Judicatories are not guilty of habitual Tyranny in this Matter; but, I am sure, all in Scotland who reckon that the Settlement of Ministers over dissenting and reclaiming Congregations is contrary to the Word of God, and that Liberty where-with Christ has made his People free; such, I say, cannot but judge that the present Judicatories are guilty of habitual Tyranny and Oppression in all the Corners of this Church

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Eyes that Mr. Currie has never entred into the Argument. 'Tis like Mr. Currie in his boasting Manner may tell his Reader in his next, that his Reasons are unanswerable; but, from the Swatch I have given the Reader of his Arguing upon this first Instance of Tyranny, he may judge of the rest. For my Part, I judge them so trifling, that I do not think it worth my while to spend Time further upon them. And I think it proper to be the shorter upon the Instances that follow, because I intend to subjoin some other Instances of the Tyranny of the present Judicatories, that have call'd up since writing the *Defence*.

The second Instance I give of Tyranny in the Administration is, the Act of Assembly 1733, appointing the Reverend Mr. *Ebenezer Erskine* to be rebuked for *impugning several Acts of Assembly and Proceedings of the Church-judicatories*; by which Act and Sentence, Ministerial Freedom was condemned, and the Ministers of this Church were bound up from testifying against such Proceeding of Church-judicatories, and such Acts of Assembly, which might have a direct Tendency to subvert our Constitution, and to enslave the Flock and Heritage of God: For Mr. *Erskine's* Doctrine, for which he was rebuked, was directed against the Act 1732, and the violent Proceedings of the Church-judicatories in the Settlement of Ministers.

In the third Place, The Tyranny of the Judicatories did yet rise higher; when, in consequence of an Act and Sentence of the foresaid Assembly, four Ministers were thrust out from Ministerial Communion with the Judicatories, for Protestation against the above Act and Sentence restricting Ministerial Freedom, and that merely for their own Exoneratation, and for asserting their Privilege and Duty to testify publicly against Steps of Defection upon all proper Occasions. Upon the above Heads, Mr. Currie in his *Vindication* repeats over what he had said in his *Essay*, without ever entering into the Argument as I have laid it in the *Defence*. As for Instance, he alledges, That the Act of the Assembly 1733 against the four Brethren was repealed by what was done in the Assembly 1734, and by the Synod of *Perth and Stirling* in consequence of the said Deed; but he never once enters into my Reasons, by which I prove that the Act 1733 against the Brethren was never either formally or materially repealed. Tho' he pretends to follow me Foot for Foot yet he passeth over my Reasonings in deep Silence, particularly the Argument as I lay it before him from the Brethren's Paper, intituled, *Reasons of Not-acceding*. The Reader

may see all this with his own Eyes, if he compares *Defence*, p. 111, 112, 113, 114. with *Vindication*, p. 116, 117.

With respect to the restricting of Ministerial Freedom in testifying doctrinally against the sinful Proceedings of Church-judicatories, which I affirm is plainly condemned by the Act of Assembly 1733; Mr. *Currie* never once touches the Argument as I have laid it, *Def.* p. 114. from the Middle, and p. 115, 116. compared with *Vind.* p. 116, 117. where the Reader will find that he tells over and over again, what he has learned from his new Friends the *Narrative-writers*, to wit, That Mr. *Erskine* was not rebuked for testifying against the Act 1732 and other Proceedings of Church-judicatories, but for the Manner of doing it: But this is fully answered by the Brethren in their *Review* of the Narrative, p. 9, 10, 11. I shall only further observe upon this Head, that Mr. *Currie* tell his Reader, *Vind.* p. 116. That once he took the Sentence against Mr. *Erskine* to be for impugning the Act 1732 and the other Proceedings of Church-judicatories; but he finds that this is absolutely denied by such as voted in that Sentence, who, *he says*, continue to affirm that it was for the Manner of doing it. But it seems, that whatever Mr. *Currie's* Thoughts about the Act 1733 were formerly, that he is become so obsequious now to his new Friends the *Narrative-writers*, that he will take their *Say*, in direct Contradiction to the express Words of the Act of Assembly; but he might have known, that their above Affirmation was an After-invention, to extricate themselves out of the Thickers, in which they found themselves intangled by their arbitrary Act and Sentence.

The Tyranny of the Judicatories did yet further increase, when, by an Act of the same Assembly 1733, the highest Censures of the Church are denounced against Ministers, if they dispense sealing Ordinances to such as are aggrieved with Intruders; and whereby People who cannot submit to the Ministry of such who, even in Mr. *Currie's* Account in his *Jus Populi Divinum* above-quoted, are impious Robbers, guilty of Rapine and Sacrilege, are excommunicated from sealing Ordinances. This was done materially by the Act of the foresaid Assembly against the Ministers of the Presbytery of *Dunfermline*.

A fifth Instance of the Tyranny of the present Judicatories is, That, by the above-mentioned Acts and Deeds, several sinful and unwarrantable Terms of Communion are imposed upon the Ministers and other Members of this Church. I treat of this Act of Tyranny in a Section by itself, *Def.*

p. 127. and in the same Place I condescend upon four new and unwarrantable Terms of Communion; and I prove, that by the Acts of *Assembly 1733*, against the protesting Ministers and the Ministers of the Presbytery of *Dunfermline*, unwarrantable Terms of Communion are imposed upon the Ministers and Members of this Church, *Def.* p. 129, 130, 131. which if the Reader is pleased to compare with *Vind.* p. 132. he will find, that Mr. *Currie* repeats the same Things again and again, without ever entring into the Argument. There is indeed one new Thing advanced by Mr. *Currie*, and that is an Appeal to the Reverend Mr. *Erskine*, *Vind.* p. 131. to whom he gives a very just Character; and it is Mr. *Currie's* ordinary, when any Author is alledged by him for the Support as he may apprehend of his Argument, some great Character or other is given him, tho' perhaps in other Respects he may differ widely from him. And what is it that the Reverend Mr. *Erskine* says? Says Mr. *Currie*, He pleads in his *Reasons of Appeal*, That our Confession of Faith, Form of Church-government, and other subordinate Standards, are the only Terms of Ministerial Communion amongst us; and that the Synod by their Sentence, rebuking him for preaching against the Act 1732, made the said Act a Term of Ministerial Communion: And therefore, says Mr. *Currie*, Mr. *Erskine* argues, That, if the foresaid Act be a Term of Ministerial Communion, why not other Acts? See *State of the Process*, p. 43. Mr. *Currie* might have added, That the Brethren who dissented from the Sentence of that Synod, argued in the same Way and Manner, *State Process*, p. 57. To all which I reply, That Mr. *Erskine* in his above Reasonings as they are more fully set down in the *State of the Process*, and all the dissenting Brethren, argued very justly as the Case then stood: But, what is the Amount of Mr. *Currie's* Reasonings upon this Head? It is even this; Mr. *Erskine* pled, That, when he was rebuked for testifying against a particular Act of Assembly, the Synod of *Perth* did thereby make particular Acts of Assembly Terms of Ministerial Communion; but the *Assembly 1733* who met half a Year thereafter, and who affirmed the Sentences of the Synod of *Perth* and *Stirling*, and who condemned Mr. *Erskine* for impugning Acts of Assembly and Proceedings of Church-judicatories, have not by their Authority established new Terms of Ministerial Communion. Who may not see the Weakness and Inconsistency of such Reasoning? If I were to speak in Mr. *Currie's* Strain, I would say, It is unworthy of the weakest; but I shall only say, His above

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Arguing from Mr. *Erskine's* Reasons of Appeal is, as he sometimes speaks, a mere *Blind* and *Fallacy*.

The last Instance I give of Tyranny in the Administration, *Def.* p. 117. is, the Contempt the present Judicatories have cast upon the Petitions and Representations of Ministers and other Church-members, who have come to their Bar, spreading out their lamentable Grievances before *them*, and craving, that the Judicatories might discharge their Duty, for the Honour of God and the Relief of his oppressed Heritage: But, what Treatment have such Petitions and Representations met with? They have even been refused a simple Reading; the Judicatories were so far from taking their Grievances under Consideration, that they would not read their Petitions in open Court: Yea, a considerable Body of Ministers with some Ruling Elders, when they came before the Assembly 1732 with a Petition and Representation of Grievances, their Petition could not get the common Right and Privilege of a *Transmit* unto the Assembly: And when they came to the Bar of the Assembly, with their Petitions in their Hands, demanding that Piece of common Justice, to have their Petition read and considered; tho' they were Office-bearers in the House of God, they were despised and quite disregarded, as if they had not been Church-members. This obliged some of them to give in a signed Protestation in their own Name, and in the Name of the rest of the Subscribers of the Petition, "For the Preservation of the just Rights belonging to them, as Men, Christians, and Office-bearers in this Church, by the Light of Nature, Word of God, Constitutions of this Church, Claim of Right, Laws of the Land, and manifold approved Precedents since the Reformation to this Day, to have Representations and Petitions anent Grievances—received, openly read, and taken into serious Consideration, &c." The above Deed of the Assembly is what I call, in the *Defence*, a Piece of the greatest Tyranny; and Mr. *Currie* was one of the Ministers that signed the above Protestation: And yet in his *Vindication*, p. 119. he tells his Reader, That tho' they had a Right to present their Petition, and a Right to ask that it should be read and considered, and tho' he thought the Assembly was to blame in refusing to consider it; yet he never had such a Notion of Tyranny, as to judge that this was an Act of the greatest Tyranny, or of *any* Tyranny at all. What, was there no Tyranny at all in it, when Mr. *Currie* and others were denied a Privilege which, they protested in such a publick Manner, did belong to them as Men and Christians.

stians, by the very Light of Nature, as well as the Word of God, &c. and yet no Tyranny at all? One might blush at such bare-faced Inconsistencies. 'Tis but a sorry Evasion, when Mr. *Currie* tells his Reader, "That one may have a good Right to demand a Thing, and present a Petition; and yet a Judicatory may judge it inconvenient to receive it, and to consider it at that Season." I hope Mr. *Currie* was dealing sincerely, when he sign'd that Protestation with his other Brethren; and that he thought, at that Time at least, that, when the Assembly refused their Petition a Reading, they were denied their just Rights and Privileges as Men and Christians, &c. And therefore his little *Latin* Phrase about positive Duties, That they bind *semper*, but not *ad semper*, tho' it may amuse some of his Readers, stands him in little Stead here: And, if the Reader that knows not the *Latin* would know the Meaning of Mr. *Currie's Latin* Phrase, it is this in plain *English*, That it was not a positive Duty, obliging the Assembly 1732 at that Time to read and consider the Petition and Representation of a Body of Ministers that came to their Bar with their Grievances, besides a Petition and Representation by upwards of 1500 Members of this Church from different Corners of the Land: But, as this appears to me to be inconsistent with his above Protestation, so, in his Way of writing, he makes but a very small Account of the Neglect, yea, even the Contempt, that the said Assembly did cast, not only upon such a Body of Ministers and People, but also upon the seasonable and necessary Duty of Contending and Witnessing against the Course of Defection and Backsliding which at that Time prevailed in the Church.

I proceed now to give some other Instances of Tyranny in the Administration of the Judicatories, which have taken place since I published the *Defence*. And, to clear my Way, I must give a short Narrative of some Proceedings of the Judicatories, and of the Conduct and Behaviour of the *Seceding Brethren* under them.

The General Assembly that met *Anno* 1738 having pass'd an Act concerning the *Seceding Ministers*, containing many grievous and calumnious Charges, they in like manner empowered their Commission to prepare a Libel against them, and to cite them before the subsequent Assembly 1739. I have already examined the Act and Deed of the foresaid Assembly 1738, *Def* p. 169, 170, &c. and therefore I shall not here make any further Reflections upon it, but refer my Reader to what I have there observed.

The Commission of the Assembly 1738 did, in consequence of the Powers that were given them, prepare a Libel against the *Seceding Brethren*. The Libel was put into their Hands, and they were cited to appear before the Assembly 1739. When the Libel and Citation was given them, the *Seceding Ministers* judged it their Duty to enquire into the Language of this Providence, and into the Duties they were thereby called unto: And, some Time being spent in Prayer and Conference upon this Head, they judged that the present Providence was a plain Call unto them to carry their Testimony somewhat further than hitherto they had done. They had already declared a *Secession* from the Judicatories, upon the Grounds and Reasons published to the World in their *1st Testimony*; they had also found it their Duty to continue in their *Secession*, notwithstanding of the Act and Deed of the Assembly 1734, which the Assembly 1738 call an *Act of Clemency* towards them; and they had in like manner published their Reasons for continuing in *Secession* from them, in their Paper, intituled, *Reasons of Not-acceding to the Judicatories, &c.* But the *Brethren* considering, that they had never yet judicially enquired into the Authority and Constitution of the present Judicatories, who, instead of reforming, were refusing to return unto the Lord, and who, instead of hearkning to the Means used to reclaim them, were libelling and citing Ministers as Criminals unto their Bar, for lifting up a *judicial Testimony* for our Covenanted Principles; they did now see and find it to be their Duty to decline the Authority of the present Judicatories, and to hold and repute them to be neither *lawful* nor *right-constitute* Courts of Christ: And accordingly, a Draught of their *1st* and *Declinature* being prepared, it was unanimously approved and enacted at *Edinburgh, May 16th 1739*. And, being called the following Day before the *Assembly*, they went in as a *Presbytery* constitute in the Name of the Head and King of *Zion*: And their *Moderator*, having told that *Assembly* so much, read in their Presence their Act of *Presbytery, Finding and declaring, that the present Judicatories of this National Church are not lawful nor right-constitute Courts of Christ; and declining all Authority, Power and Jurisdiction, that the said Judicatories may claim to themselves over the said Presbytery, or any of the Members thereof, or over any that are under their Inspection.*

I must here beg Leave to make a few Remarks upon what I have narrated above; namely, That, by the good Hand of Providence upon the *Seceding Brethren*, they have been

led from one Step to another, in their Aims at *Witnessing* Work. I noticed, in my Introduction to the *Defence*, a gradual Series of Contending in the Judicatories, before the *Secession* was declared: At length they are thrust out from Communion with the *established Church*; whereupon they declared a *Secession* from them, in the Manner that the same is expressed before the Commission *November 1733*. When the Assembly 1734 past what is called their Act of Clemency, the Brethren judged it their Duty to stand still where they were, to see if the Judicatories would return to the Lord, or if they would shew a Disposition to lift up a *judicial Testimony* for injured Truth: But the Seceding Ministers having continued for some Time waiting, and finding from the Conduct of the Assemblies 1735 and 1736, that, instead of reforming, they were going on in their backsliding Course; and that Truth had gotten a new and deep Wound, particularly by the Conduct of the said Assembly 1736; they found themselves at last obliged to emit their *Act, Declaration and Testimony*, which bears Date at *Perth December 3d 1736*, and which was published in the Beginning of the Year 1737. And no sooner is their *Testimony* published, as the Alarm is taken, the *Seceding Ministers* are cried down as gross Schismatics, Deluders of the People, and Usurpers of a paramount Power, and what not? A *Testimony* for Truth still torments the Men that dwell upon the Earth, and sets them upon *killing and slaying* the Witnesses. If the Seceding Ministers had sit silent in their Houses, if they had not emitted a *judicial Testimony* for Truth, the Judicatories would never have troubled them for their Not-attendance upon the said *Judicatories*; but now, when they make a publick and open Confession of *Scotland's* Covenanted Principles, and endeavour to point out our lamentable Deviations and Backslidings from the same both in former and present Times, they are libelled and summoned in the Manner I have reported: And their *Act and Testimony* is one of the chief and special Grounds of Libel against them. But what is the Effect of all this Procedure? The *Seceding Ministers* are led, by the good Hand of God upon them, to enlarge their *Testimony*, and *judicially* to find and declare, that the present Judicatories are *not lawful nor right-constitute Courts of Christ*. And this Sentence pronounced against them was intimate in the most publick Manner; namely, in Face of a *General Assembly*, and before a numerous Crowd of Spectators. After this, I may justly speak or write of the present Judicatories as *pretended Assemblies, pretended Synods* &c.

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I must further observe, That the *Presbytery's Act* and *Declinature* being now published to the World, it speaks for itself; and I am not afraid to say, that the Grounds upon which it stands are supported from the Word of God, and the Principles of this Reformed Church agreeable thereto: Likewise, their said *Act* contains a Summary of the Reasons of their Secession. Mr. *Currie* sometimes nibbles at their *Act and Declinature*, but he never once pretends to enter into the Argument as it is there laid; and I humbly judge, that the Grounds and Reasons, upon which the *Presbytery* go in their *Declinature*, are such as will support themselves, if the Word of God, and our Reformation-principles agreeable thereto, shall be admitted as Judge betwixt the present *Judicatories* and the *Associate Presbytery*. And I'll venture to say, That Mr. *Currie* does nothing but thresh the Water, after all that he has said in his *Essay*, and now in his voluminous *Vindication*, unless he take up the Argument as it is laid in the *Presbytery's Act and Declinature*. And, if he would serve his *Masters* the present pretended *Assemblies* and their *Commissions* more effectually, I would advise him, that, when he writes again, he may go through with the Argument as it is laid by the *Presbytery* in their said *Act*, without diverting unto the *Says* of this or the other great Man, or without making a Retreat to his usual Reflections upon the former Period betwixt 1638 and 1650. I am perswaded, such a Way of doing can never pass for Argument with any who are willing, without Prejudice and Biass, to enquire into the present Controversy.

After the *Presbytery* had intimate their above *Act and Declinature*, the foresaid pretended *Assembly* came to an *Act* and Sentence, whereby they find the Libel against the *Seceding Ministers* relevant to infer Deposition; and they likewise find it proven, in its most material Articles, from the *Presbytery's Act and Declinature*: And therefore they find and declare, that the *Seceding Ministers* do justly merit the highest Censures of this Church, particularly that of *Deposition*; but they delay, for the Reasons given in their *Act*, to come to a final Sentence at that Time, and they refer the same to the next General Assembly, to whom they earnestly recommend it to *instruct the Censure of Deposition* without further Delay, unless the said Ministers retract their *Act and Declinature*, and return to, what the Assembly calls *their Duty, Submission to this Church*. The *Seceding Ministers* have, together with their *Act and Declinature*, published some Observes upon the above-mentioned Libel, and also

upon the above *Act* of that pretended Assembly: I refer the Reader to them, and I shall only beg Leave to subjoin the following Observes.

When the Presbytery came in before the Assembly with their Declinature, the Moderator of the said Assembly told them, as their *Act* bears, "That, tho' they were called here to answer to a Libel, the Assembly were very loth to be obliged to proceed upon it; and that, if the said Defenders would now shew a Disposition to return to the Duty and Obedience they owe to this Church, the Assembly was ready to forgive all that was past, and to receive them with open Arms." Hence it is plain, that the said pretended Assembly had no Error in Doctrine to lay to their Charge; neither had they any Thing in their Walk and Conversation as *Ministers* or *Christians* to charge them with nothing of this Nature could be alledged as Ground of Libel against them: Why are they then libelled, prosecute and persecute? It is purely and only for their *Secession*, and for what concerns the same; it is because they continued in *Secession*, tho' the Judicatories themselves did at first thrust some of them out: Yea, it is because they have emitted, a *Presbytery*, a Testimony for *Scotland's* Covenanted Principles and against a Course of Defection from the same; and I dare say, they would have reckoned it Matter of Joy and Praise if the Judicatories would have done this themselves. For, whether, they are prosecuted and persecuted because they keep Fasts through several Corners of the Land, at the Desire of such as profess themselves to be grieved with the manifold Sins and Provocations of the Judicatories, and of all Ranks of Persons in this Land, both in former and present Times; and if the Judicatories would have sanctified a Fast, and called a solemn Assembly, upon the particular Grounds and Causes of the Lord's Indignation and Wrath against this sinful Church and Land, the *Associate Presbytery* would have reckoned themselves relieved of a very great Burden. Again, they are prosecute and persecute, because they have entered into a *Presbyterial* Association, for a *judicial* Confession of the Truths, in Opposition to the manifold Injuries that have been done them; as also, in order to license and ordain Ministers for the holy Ministry. Must the Sheep of Christ be left to wander upon the Mountains? Must they be left to the will of Beasts of Prey, or to *impious Robbers*, under such violent Proceedings of the Judicatories, which, as I observed already, Mr. Currie once termed *impious Robbery, Sacrilege and Rapine*? Unless the Seceding Ministers had associate for

their Relief, the scattered Flock of Christ must in all our-ward Probability have remained in the Circumstances mentioned, without any Gospel-minister or any *Ecclesiastical Jurisdictionary* to care for them, or to take any Watch or Oversight of them. The above are the chief Articles of Libel against the Seceding Ministers: They are not charged with any Error in Doctrine, nor with any Thing immoral in their Practice, this pretended Assembly, by the Mouth of their Moderator, being Judges; yet they adjudge them all to the highest Censures of the Church, particularly that of *Deposition*, and warmly recommend it to the ensuing Assembly to pass the said Sentence against them.

There is yet another Thing I must observe in the Conduct of this pretended Assembly, and that is, They sentenced Eight Ministers to Deposition, who own and acknowledge our Presbyterian Church-government, and the whole Doctrine contained in our Confession of Faith as the Confession of their Faith, and who reckon themselves bound and obliged, by their Ordination Vows and Engagements, and by our solemn National Covenants, to make a judicial Confession of the Truths of our God, and to assert and maintain the same in their Station and Capacity, against the manifest Injuries that have been done them in this Day of Treading-down in our Valley of Vision: And yet at the same Time, and with the same Breath almost, they took off the Sentence of *Deposition*, past by a Commission of Assembly *March 1730*, against Mr. *John Glass*, upon the Account of his Sectarian Principles. Tho' he denies the Divine Right of our Presbyterian Church-government, and endeavours to erect Sectarian Meetings in all Corners of the Land where he can have any Influence; and tho' he runs down Confessions of Faith, together with these excellent and useful Means of Instruction, our *Larger* and *Shorter Catechisms*; and tho' his Writings are stuffed with several other Extravagancies; as also, tho' he continues to maintain, defend and spread his gross Principles: Yet this pretended Assembly found, as their Act and Sentence concerning him bears, "That his Principles are not inconsistent with his being a Minister; and therefore they restore him to the Character of a Minister of the Gospel of Christ:" Declaring at the same Time, that his Principles are *inconsistent with the Constitution of this Church*. Let the unbiassed Part of Mankind judge for themselves, if the Proceedings of this pretended Assembly were consistent with the Truth, or even with themselves; when they judge the Principles of Eight Ministers inconsistent

stent with their being Ministers of the Gospel of Christ, tho' the said Ministers own our Confession of Faith, and the Divine Right of our Presbyterian Church-government; merely because they refuse to join in Church-communion with the present Judicatories, for the weighty Grounds and Causes contained in their Act and Declinature: And yet the said pretended Assembly find at the same Time, that the Principles of a Man are consistent with his being a Minister of the Gospel, whose Principles they themselves declare to be *inconsistent with the Constitution of this Church.*

In consequence of the above Act and Deed of the Assembly 1739, and according to their earnest Recommendation, the pretended Assembly that met 1740 did, upon the Relevancy and Proof of the Libel as above-stated, proceed to give Sentence against the *Seceding Ministers*, which is expressed in the following Terms; "This Assembly did, and hereby do, in the Name of the Lord Jesus Christ the sole King and Head of his Church, and by vertue of the Power and Authority committed by him to them, actually depose Messieurs *Ebenezer Erskine at Stirling, &c.* Ministers, from the Office of the holy Ministry; prohibiting and discharging them, and every one of them, to exercise the same, or any Part thereof, within *this Church* in all Time coming." Their Charges are declared vacant from the Date of this Sentence; and they appoint their Moderator to write Letters to the Magistrates of the respective Burghs concerned, with Copies of the said Sentence. This singular and extraordinary Sentence, whereby Eight Ministers are said to be *deposed* from the Office of the holy Ministry, who are neither charged with Error in Doctrine nor with any Thing immoral in their Practice, only for their departing, upon the Grounds and Reasons contained in their *Act and Declinature*, from Ecclesiastical Communion with the present Judicatories, and for their acting in a judicial Capacity by themselves for the Support of our Covenanted Principles, is a special Instance of the Tyranny of the present Administration. And, for the Illustration of this, I must make the following Observes;

I lay it down as a Presbyterian, yea, as a Protestant Principle, That all the Power and Authority that Ecclesiastical Judicatories have, is a limited and ministerial Authority; their Power and Authority is limited by the Word of God as the supreme Rule, *Isa. 8. 20.* As also, when any Reformed Church has received and adopted a Set of Principles as agreeable to the Word of God, and has laid them

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down in a Confession of Faith, or in Ecclesiastical Acts and Constitutions, she is limited by these, as the subordinate Rule and Standard, in all her particular Determinations: And therefore I subsume, That the Determinations and Decisions of the Judicatories of a Church ought to bear some Evidence and Stamp of their being agreeable to the Rule; and every Church-judicatory should evidence her Acts and Determinations to be agreeable to these Principles which they have received and adopted, in Conformity to the supreme Rule and Standard, namely, the *Word of God*. As Ministers in the Exercise of the Key of Doctrine, so the Office-bearers of the Church in their judicative Capacity, ought to declare *only* the Mind of Christ from his Word to the Members of the Church: It is the Voice of Christ that Christ's Sheep ought to hear, whether from the Pulpit or from the Courts of the Lord's House. The bare *say* of Ministers or Judicatories does not bind the Consciences of Church-members; both Ministers and Judicatories ought to give some Evidence that what they *say* is the Mind and Will of the Lord Jesus himself, the only Lawgiver to his Church and People: But both the late pretended Assemblies, in Contradiction to the above Protestant Principle, have dealt with the Seceding Ministers in a *magisterial* and *lordly* Manner, by mere Church Power and Authority; they have deposed them: Why? Because they have seceded, because they have given in a Declinature, finding and declaring as their Declinature narrates. But, have they ever examined the Grounds of their Secession? Have they ever compared them with the Law and the Testimony, or with the Acts and Constitutions of this Church agreeable thereto? Nay, they have never once pretended so much as to examine them by the Rule; but they have condemned them summarily for their Secession, and for their Declinature in Bulk: If this is agreeable to Protestant Principles, let the World judge. Can they give an Instance of it, in any well-constitute Ecclesiastical Court, where their Power and Authority has been declined, and Grounds and Reasons offered for the same, and yet that the Court have not particularly examined the Grounds and Reasons of such Declinature, and offered their Reasons from the Word of God for taking off the Force of the same? So did the Synod of *Dort*, in the Case of the *Remonstrants*; and so will every Synod do, who binds not up the Consciences of Church-members to give implicate Faith to their Decisions. I am informed, that, at the late pretended Assembly, some of the Members pled, that the

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Grounds of the Seceding Ministers Declinature or Secession might be enquired into and examined, and that this was absolutely refused: Whether it was so or not, I am sure that a Demand of this Kind was both just and reasonable; but, if the Assembly had impartially examined the Facts and Deeds objected unto them by the Associate Presbytery in their Act and Declinature, the Deeds of the present Judicatories could not have born the Light, they could not have born the Trial of the Lord's Word, nor of the Acts and Constitutions of this Church agreeable thereunto. When the Seceding Ministers published their Testimonies both first and second, the Judicatories might have pled for themselves, that they were not concerned with such Papers, which were never laid before them in Judgment: But now they are without Excuse; they have had a short Summary of the Grounds of our Secession read in open Court before the late pretended Assembly, and put into the Hands of their *Moderator*; but as they have never once examined the same, nor offered the least Answer unto the Facts objected unto them, nor any Thing from the Word of God, or Constitutions of this Church, to take off the Force and Weight of the Reasonings contained in the Presbytery's Act and Declinature, therefore I may justly conclude, that all the thinking Part of Mankind, that are not under the same wilful Prejudice and Biass with Mr. Currie and his pretended Assemblies and Commissions, will acknowledge that I have just Reason to say, That the late pretended Assembly have deposed the Seceding Ministers by their mere arbitrary Will and Pleasure, or they have deposed them because they would have them deposed.

2dly, The above-mentioned Act and Deed against the Seceding Ministers is laid in ambiguous Terms; in regard they prohibit and discharge the said Ministers, and every one of them, to exercise the Office of the Ministry, or any Part thereof, *within this Church*, in all Time coming. Tho' they pretend to depose them in the Name of the Lord Jesus, yet they do not absolutely prohibit them the Exercise of the Ministerial Office; but they prohibit and discharge them to exercise the same, only, *within this Church*. By the Words of the Assembly, *within this Church*, may be either meant, within the Bounds of this National Church, that is, within *Scotland*; and, in this Sense of their Words, the Seceding Ministers may warrantably and lawfully exercise their Ministry anywhere else, tho' this Assembly pretend to depose them from their Office in the Name of the Lord: Or,

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by the Term, *within this Church*, may be meant, within that which is called the *established Church*; that is, they are discharged the Exercise of their Ministry, as Ministers of the established Church of *Scotland*; and, if this is the Meaning of that Assembly's Words, then the Seceding Ministers have never since their Secession disputed this Point with the Judicatories; they have never reckoned themselves Ministers of what is called the established Church, since the Time that they declared their Secession from Ecclesiastical Communion with the present Judicatories: Yea, they may justly reckon, upon all the Grounds and Reasons I have given in this Section, that, under the Shadow of that which is called the Legal or Civil Establishment, the present Judicatories are departing from, and treading down, our Reformed and Covenanted Principles; whereby the legal Establishment is become a Snare unto them, and, tho' good in itself to a Church when rightly used, yet it is abused by the present Judicatories, not only to the Hurt and Prejudice, but, if the Lord in his sovereign Mercy do not prevent, to the Subversion and total Ruin of the once famous Reforming and Covenanting Church of *Scotland*.

3dly, I observe, That tho' the pretended Sentence of Deposition is passed in the above arbitrary Manner, and laid in the above ambiguous Terms, yet they pretend to do it "in the Name of the Lord Jesus Christ, the sole King and Head of the Church, and by vertue of the Power and Authority committed by him to them." Which, for the Reasons I have given above against the said *Act*, appears to me to be a publick Profanation of the great and holy Name of our exalted Redeemer, who is *given to be Head over all Things to his Church which is his Body*, and unto whom his Father has *given a Name above every Name, that at the Name of Jesus every Knee should bow*. The Seceding Ministers are warned to lay their Account with such Treatment; and they may comfort and encourage themselves, under it, from the Words of the Lord, *John 16. 2. Luke 6. 22. Isa. 66. 5*. It is not the first Time that Ecclesiastical Judicatories have profaned and blasphemed that adorable Name, by their tyrannical Acts and Sentences. The Anti-Christian Church, that *Woman* who is full of Names of Blasphemy, *Rev. 17. 3*. does emit her Acts and Constitutions by the Pope, who pretends to be Christ's Vicar on Earth, in the Name of the Lord Jesus, the sole King and Head of his Church: Therefore the Seceding Ministers have not Ground to be dismayed or discouraged, when corrupt Ec-

ecclesiastical Courts *separate them from their Company, and reproach them, and cast out their Name as evil for the Son of Man's Sake*: And, when all this is pretended to be done in the Name of the Lord, 'tis no new Thing; *Your Brethren that hated you, and cast you out for my Name's Sake, said, Let the Lord be glorified.*

I shall only further observe, That the above Deed of the late pretended *Assembly* is, on the Part of the present Judicatories, a doing what in them lies, in their Ecclesiastical Capacity, to bury a Testimony for Christ in Scotland. Their present Testimony, on the Part of the Seceding Ministers and their Adherents, is their publick Confession of the Truth held forth from the Word of God in our *Confession of Faith*, in Opposition unto these dangerous Errors that have sprung up in this perillous Day wherein we live: It is their Confession of the Order, Government and Discipline of our Lord's House, of the Rights of his spiritual, free and independent Kingdom, as also of the Liberties of his Subjects, in Opposition unto the Violence and Injuries, the Dishonours and Indignities that have been done the same, both in former and present Times. What have the Judicatories done? They pretend to depose the Seceding Ministers: I do not compare myself with any of them, nay, I do not think myself worthy to be named amongst *Witnesses* for Christ; but the Deed of the late pretended *Assembly* is in itself an Ecclesiastical killing and slaying of the *Witnesses*, and a burying their Testimony: I pray the Judicatories may see the Evil of it, that this Iniquity and Wickedness may not be laid to their Charge.

The last Instance I give of Tyranny in the Administration is the Conduct of the late pretended *Assembly*, upon passing their extraordinary Sentence against the *Seceding Ministers*. As I observed above, they appointed their *Moderator* to write Letters with Copies of their Sentence to the *Magistrates* of the several Burghs concerned; this was done with an evident Design to stir up the *Magistrates* against their Ministers: It was also execute without Delay; the Sentence is passed upon *Thursday* 15th of *May*, and, before or upon the ensuing Lord's Day, the *Moderator's* Letters came to the *Magistrates* of the respective Burghs. The *Magistrates* of *Stirling*, in Obedience to the *Assembly's* Sentence, discharged the Church-bells to be rung for convening the People to Worship; they likewise commanded the Church and Church-yard Doors to be lock'd against their faithful Minister the Reverend Mr. *Ebenezer Erskine*, whom they had unanimously called to labour

in the Work of the Ministry amongst them; whereby they served themselves *Heirs* to the Iniquity and Wickedness of some of their Forefathers in that Place, who stoned that eminent *Seer* in his Day, and faithful Martyr, Mr. *James Guthrie*. Likewise, the Magistrates of *Perth*, having received the *Moderator's* Letter upon the *Sabbath* Morning, sustained themselves *Executioners* of the *Assembly's* Sentence against their Minister, who, according to the Measure of Grace given him, had laboured near Twenty four Years in the Work of the Ministry amongst them, and who was also unanimously called to that Work by the People of that Congregation: The said *Magistrates* themselves came to guard the Church-doors, and, when they saw their Minister coming, shut the Doors upon him; whereupon one Mr. *John Haly* then a *Probationer*, employed by Mr. *David Black* to preach that Day, being attended by the said Mr. *Black*, was with the Assistance of the Magistrates thrust into his Pulpit. I pray the Lord may give them Repentance for and the Forgiveness of their Iniquity, and that it may not be laid to their Charge, nor to the Charge of that Place. As for the rest of the *Seceding* Ministers, they do as yet possess their Churches, except the Reverend Mr. *Nairn* Minister at *Abbotshall*, the *Heritors* of that Parish having at their own Hands, sometime in the Month of *October* last, locked the Church and Church-yard Doors, and nailed Iron Plates on the Key-holes of the said Doors. The Conduct of the Judicatories, in stirring up the Civil Powers against the *Seceding Ministers*, is not unlike the Tyranny of the Church of *Rome*, who first condemn the Protestants as *Hereticks*, and then deliver them up to the *Secular Powers* to be prosecuted and punished, as if they were the grossest Criminals and Malefactors. Upon the Whole, It is Matter of Mourning and Lamentation, that, in the once Reforming and Covenanting Church of *Scotland*, Judicatories that call themselves *Presbyterian*, should after this Manner prosecute and persecute Ministers, who are endeavouring to bear Testimony to our Reformed and Covenanted Principles: Ah! that it should be told in *Gath*, and published in the Streets of *Askelon*, to the Laughter and Joy of these that are open and declared Enemies of our Reformation Rights and Principles! However, all the Well-wishers and true Friends of *Zion* may encourage themselves in this, that the Lord *will yet arise and have Mercy upon Zion, and that, when he builds up Zion, he will appear in his Glory.*

From the several Instances I have given of the Tyranny of the present Judicatories in the Administration, it is evi-

dent to me, that this National Church, as she is represented in her present Judicatories, has not a Claim to the above-mentioned Character of a *true Church*, given in the Eighteenth Article of our *first Confession of Faith*, and in the other *Confessions* of the Reformed Churches: And that, tho' her outward Form is *Presbyterian*, yet she is not a Whit better than if her Form and Model were *Prelatical*; in regard she exerciseth a lordly and magisterial Power over the Heritage of God, in the several Instances which I have given; her present Judicatories rule the Flock of Christ with Rigour; they are guilty of such Violence and Oppression upon the Heritage of God, as Mr. Currie in his *Jus Divinum* calls *impious Robbery, Sacrilege and Rapine*; they are, in the Instances above given, perverting the Keys of Government and Discipline; they are so far from exercising them for the Edification of the Body of Christ, that they are exercised for their Destruction; they are not gathering but scattering the Sheep of Christ; and, in the several Instances above-mentioned, they are walking quite contrary to the End and Design of their Erection and Constitution in the *Church*, which is mainly and chiefly for the Honour and Glory of the exalted Head, for the Edification of the Body of Christ, for the Redress of their Grievances, for the Preservation of the Institutions of Christ in their Purity, for maintaining that Liberty wherewith Christ hath made his People free, and for purging the Church of such Errors or erroneous Persons whereby the whole Body is in Danger to be leavened: But, instead of answering these valuable Ends, the present Judicatories have let the Erroneous go without Censure, or with no Censure proportioned to the Scandal they have given; they have cast out of their Communion, they have suspended and deposed, Ministers against whom they have not nor cannot bring the Charge of Error in Doctrine, or Immorality in Practice; they have spoiled the Flock of Christ of that Liberty wherewith Christ the Head hath made them free; they neglect and despise the Petitions and Representations of Church-members for the Redress of Grievances; and they shew no Evidences, to this Day, of Repentance for their Tyranny in the above and like Instances, nor of a Disposition to reform their Violence: By all which, they have so far forfeited their Claim to the Exercise of the Keys, that the same devolves upon the smaller Part, who desire to cleave to our Reformed, *Presbyterian* and *Covenanted* Principles. From the Observes that I have made above, upon the *Instances* of Tyranny mentioned in the De-

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fence, the Reader may see, that Mr. Currie has never entered into the Argument; and that my Argument, as it is stated upon the Head of Tyranny, stands good, notwithstanding of what is advanced by Mr. Currie. And, when the above Instances of the tyrannical Proceedings of the two late *pretended General Assemblies* are subjoined, the Argument comes out with new Force and Evidence; if a *Judicial Killing* and *Slaying Witnesses* for the Truth, if a *Judicial Burying* a Testimony for Truth, can be sustained as Instances of *Ecclesiastical Tyranny*. And when all the Instances of Tyranny are put together, and especially when it is considered that the Judicatories continue impenitent and obstinate in their Sin, every unprejudiced Person may see, that the present Judicatories are not only guilty of some Acts of Tyranny, but of *habitual Tyranny* in the Administration.

S E C T. III.

Whether or not Intruders, or such as are imposed upon dissenting and reclaiming Congregations, ought to be received by the Church, as lawful and sent Ministers of Christ?

ONE of the Characters of a *true Church*, given us in the 18th Article of our first Confession of Faith, is, *The right Administration of the Sacraments of Jesus Christ, which must be annexed to the Word and Promise of God, to seal and confirm the same in our Hearts.* Upon this Mr. Currie in his *Essay*, p. 3. tells us, "None can object against this, that the Seals of God's Covenant are as purely administered in this Church, as ever they were in any." Yet I have objected against this, and I have affirmed, that Mr. Currie might have spared, or at least he ought to have qualified, his above confident Boast. And I have given my Grounds and Reasons for saying so, first in the Postscript to my printed *Letter*, p. 39. and afterwards, *Def. Chap. 2. Sect. 3.* where I observed, Our Reforming Fathers, in the 22d Article of the said Confession, teach, That two Things are requisite to the right Ministration of the Sacraments. The one is, "That they be ministered by lawful Ministers, whom they affirm to be only such as are appointed to the Preaching of the Word — they being Men *lawfully chosen thereto by some Church:*" The other Requisite is, "That they be ministered in such Sort and such Elements

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ONE of the Characters of a *true Church*, given us in the 18th Article of our first Confession of Faith, is, *The right Administration of the Sacraments of Jesus Christ, which must be annexed to the Word and Promise of God, to seal and confirm the same in our Hearts.* Upon this Mr. Currie in his *Essay*, p. 3. tells us, "None can object against this, that the Seals of God's Covenant are as purely administered in this Church, as ever they were in any." Yet I have objected against this, and I have affirmed, that Mr. Currie might have spared, or at least he ought to have qualified, his above confident Boast. And I have given my Grounds and Reasons for saying so, first in the Postscript to my printed *Letter*, p. 39. and afterwards, *Def. Chap. 2. Sect. 3.* where I observed, Our Reforming Fathers, in the 22d Article of the said Confession, teach, That two Things are requisite to the right Ministration of the Sacraments. The one is, "That they be ministered by lawful Ministers, whom they affirm to be only such as are appointed to the Preaching of the Word — they being Men *lawfully chosen thereto by some Church*:" The other Requisite is, "That they be ministered in such Sort and such Elements

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“ as God has appointed, &c.” And, *Def.* p. 119. I observe that we may learn from the *fourth* Head of the first Book of Discipline, compared with Head twentieth, what they mean by Men *lawfully chosen* to the Work of the Ministry, namely, such as are chosen by the Flock and Heritage of God, to take the Charge and Oversight of their Souls. And from the above Words of our Confession I conclude in my *Postscript*, that Mr. Currie cannot refuse that there are many intruded into the holy Ministry, being Men that were never lawfully chosen thereto by any Church; and that, according to the foresaid Confession, they are not *lawful Ministers*, &c. Mr. Currie, in his *Short Vindication*, makes the following Exception to my above Argument, *viz.* That our first Confession makes only two Things requisite to the right Ministration of the Sacraments: The first is, That Men be lawfully chosen to the Work of the Gospel by some Church or *Judicatory thereof*; for, by *Church*, a Presbytery, or Ministers, the Church-representative, *says he*, is meant. Upon this I observe, *Def.* p. 120. That Mr. Currie, in the above Words, makes an Addition to the Confession of Faith; in regard that, whereas the Confession, in giving the Character of lawful Ministers, makes this one, They being Men *lawfully chosen* to the Work of the Ministry by *some Church*, Mr. Currie thinks fit to add, *or Judicatory thereof*; but the Confession says no such Thing. Here Mr. Currie, *Vind.* 122. flies out after his usual manner in a Charge and Accusation of *slandering* him; and, to vindicate himself from the Charge I lay against him of adding to our Confession, he says, He gave it as a Commentary upon the Words of the Confession; that by *Church* there he understands *Church-judicatories*, as a Presbytery, the *Church-representative*. But if Passion or Prejudice had not overcome him, he might have seen, that I take up his Words in the very Way in which he says he understands them; and therefore I tell him, That the Word *Church* is nowhere taken in our Confession for the *Church-representative*: I add, That the Word *Church*, in the Place quoted, cannot be taken in Mr. Currie’s Sense; “ because the Confession speaks of the *Election*, and not of the *Ordination*, of Ministers. To *choose* and *ordain* are quite different Things, and have as different Meanings as the words have different Letters, Syllables and Sounds.” Mr. Currie, after a Quotation from Mr. *Rutherford*, quite foreign to the present Purpose, and which I shall consider by and by, tells his Reader, That the Word *Church* is sometimes taken in Scripture for the Church-representative. What then

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Does it therefore follow, that it is so taken in this Place the Confession of Faith? Mr. Currie knows very well, that the Word *Church* is frequently taken in Scripture for the collective Church, and so it is taken in our Confession. And, if Mr. Currie had spoke to the Purpose, he should have made a Reply to my above Reasons, and to others which I advance, to prove that the Word *Church* is not nor cannot be taken in our Confession of Faith for the Church-representative: But he passes them all over without any answer unto them; and I leave it to the impartial Reader to judge if I have slandered him, when I say, He makes an addition to the Confession of Faith, by forcing a Sense upon them which the Words do not nor cannot bear, in this Place of our Confession.

Mr. Currie thinks fit in his *Vind.* p. 121, 126. to accuse me of Error, Unsoundness, and manifest Contrariety to the sentiments of orthodox Divines upon the present Question: and therefore I shall lay down my Principles as they are stated in my *Defence*; and then I shall enquire into the Reasons that are alledged by Mr. Currie, or *some others* for him, for Proof of the grievous Charge he brings against me. I affirm, in the *first* Place, That such as are intruded upon Christian Congregations, or who are settled in Opposition to the dissenting and reclaiming Heritage of God, as they run unsent to the Work of the Lord, so they ought not to be acknowledged by the Church as her lawful Ministers; or, to use Mr. Currie's Words in his Preface to his *Just Div.* p. 4. Such as are *impious Robbers*, and guilty of *rapine* and *Sacrilege*, are not lawful Ministers of Christ: and hence I conclude, that the Administration of Gospel-ordinances by such as are Intruders, or who run unsent, wants that Purity and Rectitude which the Divine Institution requires. As these are my Principles, so I reckon that I am supported in them by the above-quoted Article of our Confession of Faith. Mr. Currie tells me, That the Question betwixt him and me is not so much about the Meaning of our Confession, as about what he takes to be my Doctrine upon this Head; but as I am satisfied that the Doctrine of our Confession is the Doctrine of all our Reformed Divines agreeable to the Word of God, so I teach no other Doctrine in my *Defence*, but that which is laid down in the above 22d Article of our first Confession, if the Words are understood in their plain and obvious Meaning, as I have shown in the *Defence*.

And, for setting the Question betwixt Mr. Currie and me

in some further Light, I hope he will not dispute it with me, that a lawful Calling to the Work and Office of the holy Ministry is needful to denominate one a lawful Minister of Christ; and that we are taught in our first Book of Discipline, Head 4. and in our second Book of Discipline, Parag. 6. That a lawful Vocation to the Ministry, and that an ordinary outward Calling unto any Office Ecclesiastical, hath these two special Parts, *Election* and *Ordination*: I suppose likewise, that Mr. Currie will not refuse it, that our first Book of Discipline expressly affirms, That it appertaineth to the People, and to every several Congregation, to elect their Minister; neither will he refuse, that the second Book of Discipline gives at least a full *Negative* to the Congregation over the Eldership in the *Election* of a Minister: Therefore it is plain from our Books of Discipline, that, when a Man is settled over a dissenting and reclaiming Congregation, one Thing at least is wanting, which, the said Books of Discipline affirm, is necessary in ordinary Cases unto a lawful Vocation unto the holy Ministry, namely, the *Election*, Call or Consent of the Congregation. I shall here transcribe a few Observations from *Apollonius*, which I judge may serve to clear and illustrate this Matter; and, since Mr. Currie sometimes commends him as a learned Author, I hope his Judgment will have some Weight with him. In his Book, intituled, *A Consideration of certain Controversies agitated in the Kingdom of England, &c. Engl. Translat. p. 46. says he,* "When we consider of a Pastor's Calling entirely and absolutely, and not in reference to some Part of it, by it is the whole Derivation of Ecclesiastical Right on this or that Person performed: And thus it comprehendeth *Election* and *Ordination*." The same Author observes, p. 57. That there is a Liberty of Nomination or Election allowed by the Word of God to all the Members in a Church, so as no Minister may without the Agreement and Consent of the People be obtruded upon a Church whether they will or not. And he very well adds, "Which Nomination or Election doth not yet confer Ministerial Power on the Person elected, but only designeth a Person on whom it may be duly derived, according to the instituted Rule, by those who have under Christ received that Power whereby Ecclesiastical Authority is derived on this or that Person." This learned Author does very well express the Doctrine contained in my *Defence*, namely, That a Calling to the Pastoral Office, considered absolutely and entirely, includes *Election* and *Ordination*: Tho' Election

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doth not confer Ministerial Power and Authority, yet it designeth the Person on whom it may be duly derived, according to the Lord's Institution; hence, when one is ordained to the Office of the Ministry, by whomsoever he is ordained, if he has not the Call or Consent of the Flock of Christ, he enters not in by that *Door* by which the Head of the Church will have all that bear Office in his House to enter into their several Ecclesiastical Offices. I have Mr. Currie's Testimony to this Purpose, in his *Jus Populi Divinum*, p. 109. where he says, "Where Ministers have entered by Calls from the Majority of Heritors and Elders, while the Body or major Part of the Lord's People have been averse from and opposed the Settlement, their Entrance hath been by the *wrong Door*." Yea, such who have entered into the Office of the Ministry in the Manner mentioned, have *run unsent*; as Mr. Currie likewise in the same Place tells us from Mr. Park against *Patronages*, p. 141. His Words are, "Where Ministers have not had the voluntary Consent of the Church and People concerned, I see not how they could have been free from the Guilt of having *run unsent*." I may therefore justly conclude, that those who enter not in by the Door, but climb up some other Way, or who run unsent, are not lawful and sent Ministers of Christ; neither is the Church obliged to receive or acknowledge them as such, while they justify their iniquity, and give no Evidence of their Repentance for the Scandal and Offence which they have given.

This leads me to the other Thing asserted in my *Defence*, which Mr. Currie exclaims against as erroneous and unsound, namely, That when Ordinances are dispensed in the Church by such as have not entered in by the *Door*, or by such as have *run unsent* unto the Office of the holy Ministry, their Ministrations want that Purity and Rectitude that the Divine Institution requires. This appears to me to be a just and native Conclusion from the former Head; in regard that, in order to the Purity of the Dispensation of Gospel-ordinances, the Divine Institution requires, not only that Gospel-ministrations with respect to both Word and Sacraments be agreeable to the Word of God as to the Matter of them, but also that they be dispensed by such as have a lawful Calling to such Ministrations; for, *How shall they preach except they be sent?* Rom. 10. 15. The above are the Principles which I maintain, and which Mr. Currie charges with Error and Unsoundness. I shall therefore enquire, how he supports the Charge he brings against me. He alledges in the first Place, *Vind. p. 121.*

That I go in with the Principle of the Independents, who, in their Confession of Faith drawn up *at the Savoy*, affirm, " They do not allow that Ordination to the Work of the Ministry, tho' it be by Persons rightly ordained, does convey any Office-power without a previous Election of the Church, &c." But this is none of my Principles; for I allow that Ordination conveys Office-power without any previous Election, tho' I also affirm that previous Election is in ordinary Cases the instituted Door of Entrance into any Ecclesiastical Office, as to the due Exercise thereof; and that such who enter not in by this Door, but climb up some other Way, are, according to Mr. Currie himself, *Thieves and Robbers*. Mr. Currie adds, That at the *Westminster Assembly* the Independents entered their Dissent against any Ordinations previous to Persons being elected by some Church, according to *Neal's Hist.* Vol. 3d. p. 150. But the Question upon which the Independents entered their Dissent, according to the said Historian, was as follows; " Whether certain Ministers of this City may not be appointed to ordain Ministers in the City and Neighbourhood, for a certain Time, *jure fraternitatis*?" But as the above Question plainly respects extraordinary Cases, so I told Mr. Currie, *Def.* p. 124. that extraordinary Cases fall not under the present Question, and therefore the *Independents* mentioned did dissent without any just Ground or Foundation.

Mr. Currie alledges in the next Place, That I have not taken the least Notice of something advanced by him in his *Short Vindication*: And, because Mr. Currie seems to lay very much Stress and Weight upon it, I shall now take Notice of it. It is as follows; " Tho' some Men have been intrusted upon Christian Congregations, that will not prove the Sacraments, or Seals of the Covenant, cannot be purely dispensed by them, or their Administrations invalid. Don't such Men baptize, and administer the Sacrament of the Lord's Supper, in the same Manner that others do, without all Mixture of Will-worship or human Invention? And, have they not Authority for this by their Ordination supposed essentially valid?" To which I reply, That I observed in *Def.* p. 121. That Mr. Currie confounds two Things quite distinct, namely, the Question about the Purity of the Administration of Ordinances, and another about their Validity. Our first Confession of Faith refuses that the Sacraments were right ministrated in the Popish Church, not only because they were adulterate, but also because their

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Ministers were no *Ministers of Christ Jesus*; and yet they never refused the *Validity* of Popish Baptism. But it is the latter Part of Mr. Currie's above Quotation upon which I judge he lays most Stress, which is laid by way of Query, which no doubt he thinks very pungent; Have they not, *says he*, (to wit, Intruders) Authority for this (to wit, the Administration of Ordinances) *by their Ordination supposed essentially valid*? It is evident from the said Words, that Mr. Currie's Doctrine upon the Point in question is, That Ordination supposed *essentially valid* makes Men lawful and sent Ministers of Christ; consequently, Jesuite Priests, and the whole of the Antichristian Clergy, are lawful and sent Ministers of Christ, because their Ordination is *essentially valid*: But this Doctrine advanced by Mr. Currie is erroneous and unsound, and contrary to the Doctrine of the Reformed Churches, as it is laid down in our Confession of Faith, where it is expressly and justly affirmed, That the *Ministers of the Popish Church are no Ministers of Christ Jesus*. Likewise, according to Mr. Currie, not only Jesuite Priests, but also *Intruders*, *Simoniacks*, or these that have entred to the holy Ministry by *Simoniack* Practices, must all be held and acknowledged as lawful and sent Ministers of Christ Jesus. If a Man is ordained, or if he is *in Orders* (as they speak) by whomsoever he enter, whether by the *Pope*, the *Prelate*, or the *Presbytery*; and by whatsoever Way he enter, whether by *Intrusion* or *Simony*; he must, according to Mr. Currie's Reasonings, be held and acknowledged as a *lawful* and *sent Minister* of Jesus Christ.

Mr. Currie, to prove that I am unsound, as he alledges, and to support his own corrupt Doctrine, appeals to several eminent and worthy Divines; such as, *Rutherford*, *Gillespie*, *Hudson*, &c. He tells us from *Rutherford's Peaceable Plea*, p. 264. "It is the Ordination of a Pastor which makes one essentially a Minister; Election does only appropriate a Man's Ministry to a People." And, *Vind.* p. 126. *he says*, "It is manifest that my Doctrine upon this Head is unsound, erroneous, and contrary to the Sentiments of orthodox Divines, from what the famous *Rutherford* says in his *Due Right of Presbytery*, p. 237, 238." where 'tis said, "Tho' *Luther* and *Zwinglius* had their whole Calling from the Pope and his Clergy, yet think we not that Calling no Calling, but it hath that which essentially constitutes a Minister, &c."

As to all Mr. Currie's Authorities, I reply in the following Observations; *First*, That it is Truth, which is affirmed

by Mr. *Rutherford* and other Reformed Divines, that Election does not invest any in the Ministerial Office; this is the Act and Deed of the Presbytery, whereby, after due Examination and Trial, and *previous Election* in ordinary Cases, one is separate and set apart by Fasting and Prayer unto that holy Function; which is usually attended with the outward Sign and Ceremony of *Imposition of Hands*, according to Scripture Pattern and Example, 1 *Tim.* 4. 14. 2^{dly}, Ordination in the Church of *Rome* is so far valid, that such as are ordained in that Church ought not to be re-ordained, when they relinquish the Errors and Abominations of Popery, more as such that are baptized in that Church ought to be re-baptized. 3^{dly}, Tho' Popish Priests in the Case fore said ought not to be re-ordained, yet it is not upon the Account of *Rome's* vain Pretence to the uninterrupted Succession of her Ministers; I hope Mr. *Currie* is not so far out of the Way as to plead this: But the Ministers of the Church of *Rome* are reckoned essentially Ministers, in the same Manner that Mr. *Rutherford* and our Reformed Divines call *Rome* essentially a Church, and a true Church. See *Rutherford's Peaceable Plea*, p. 125, 127, 128, 129. And they reckon *Rome* essentially a Church, in so far as she maintains, by visible Profession, some of the essential Articles of Christianity; such as, a Trinity of Persons in the Unity of the Divine Essence, the Incarnation of the Son of God, his true Deity, the real Distinction of his Natures, the Unity of his Person, according as the Faith of the Church was professed in the first four General Councils. Yet, 4^{thly}, Tho' the Church of *Rome* is called in the above Respects essentially a Church, and tho' her Ministers are called essentially Ministers; yet *Rome*, considered as apostate and degenerate from the true Christian Profession and Faith, both in Doctrine, Worship and Government, is an *Antichristian Church*; her Ministers, according to our Confession, are not Ministers of Christ Jesus; their *Antichristian* Calling is no Calling, as Mr. *Rutherford* speaks: And in the Place above quoted (*Due Right*, p. 238.) tho' he owns them to be essentially Ministers, and adduces the Example of *Cajaphas* the High Priest to this Purpose; yet he affirms, That "we are not where forbidden in God's Word to hear Teachers sent and called, but only Wolves in Sheeps Skins, void of all Calling, and Intruders." These are Mr. *Rutherford's* Words, and they go immediately before one of Mr. *Currie's* Quotations from Mr. *Rutherford*, Vind. p. 126. but Mr. *Currie* thinks it fit to slip it over. However, 'tis plain from

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Mr. *Rutherford's* above Words, that such are not to be acknowledged by the Church as her lawful and sent Ministers, who are *Wolves in Sheeps Clothing*, as all the *Missionaries of Rome* are; neither such as are void of all Calling (and, according to Mr. *Rutherford*, *Rome's* Ministers, in respect of their Antichristian Calling, have no Calling) nor yet, according to the same learned Divine, are *Intruders* to be owned and acknowledged as Teachers sent and called. 5thly, I observe with Mr. *Hudson*, upon the Unity of the Catholick Church, p. 138. who is quoted by Mr. *Currie* in his *Vindication*, p. 127. *That Ordination gives one an habitual Power of the Ministry.* And Mr. *Hudson* in the same Place observes from another Divine, "That all Ministers are Ministers *habitu & potestate*, wherever they are; but they are only Ministers *actu & quoad legitimum exercitium*, i. e. *actually*, and with respect to the *lawful Exercise* of their Office, where they have a lawful Mission and Calling." And, to apply this Observation, I own that the Ministers of the Church of *Rome*, *Intruders*, &c. have an habitual Power to exercise the Office of the Ministry, and may warrantably exercise it as lawful and sent Ministers of Christ, upon their relinquishing their Popish Errors and Antichristian Calling, or giving Evidences of their sincere Repentance for their sinful Intrusions into the Office of the holy Ministry, for removing the Scandal and Offence that they have given to the Church of God; but while the Popish Priest justifies his Conjunction with *Rome*, and while the Intruder justifies his Iniquity, none of them can warrantably exercise the Office of the Ministry as lawful and sent Ministers of Christ.

According to the Observation immediately preceeding, I affirm, *Def.* p. 125. That when *Luther* was a blind Popish Monk, and when Mr. *Henderson* was a Prelatick Intruder, the Church was not obliged to receive any of them as her lawful or sent Ministers; but when the first was converted from the Abominations of *Popery*, and the other from his Prelatical Course and Way, then both of them might and ought to be received by the Church as her lawful and sent Ministers. Mr. *Currie*, *Vind.* p. 135. says, "Now, according to this Doctrine, converting Grace will make one a lawful Minister who was not one before, so as the Sacraments administred by him shall be right Sacraments of Jesus Christ which were not so before; and the Minister's having converting Grace will add to the Purity of the Ordinances dispensed by him." To which I reply, That
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Mr. *Currie's* Inferences are so wide, that I am not afraid to say, that they have not right Reason nor sound Divinity in them. His Argument must run to the following Purpose: Jesuite Priests, Intruders and *Simoniacks*, before they can be held and reputed lawful and sent Ministers of Christ, must remove the Scandal and Offence they have given to the Church, by some Evidences of sincere Repentance; therefore converting Grace will make one a lawful Minister who was not one before: Mr. *Currie* might with as much Reason have said, A Church-member, who upon the Account of Scandal is cast out of the Church's Communion, cannot be received into full Communion with the Church, until he give satisfying Evidences of his sincere Repentance; therefore converting Grace is necessary to make one to be held and reputed as a Member of the visible Church. But Mr. *Currie* very well knows, that it is the credible Evidences that one gives of his Repentance in the Case mentioned which give him a Right to full Communion with the visible Church in all her Ordinances: And in like Manner I affirm that the credible Evidences that the Jesuite Priest, the Intruder and *Simoniack*, give of their Repentance of the Errors of their Way, or their corrupt and scandalous Entries into the Office of the Ministry; it is this, I say, which removes the Scandal, and gives them a Right and Title to the Exercise of their Ministry as lawful and sent Ministers of Christ, and which obliges the Church to receive and acknowledge them as such. And tho' Ordinances dispensed by Ministers that are scandalous and corrupt are valid in so far as they are the Ordinances of God, yet, as they are dispensed by Ministers that are notoriously scandalous and corrupt, they want that Purity and Rectitude in the Manner of Administration which the Divine Institution requires.

Upon the Head, of the Purity and Rectitude of the Administration of Gospel-ordinances, I have still considered the Question about their Validity, and the other about the Purity of their Administration, as quite distinct: And therefore I told Mr. *Currie*, That tho' our Reformers reckoned that the Popish Ministers were not Ministers of Christ, and that the Sacraments ministrated by them were not *right* Sacraments of Jesus Christ, as is plain from the Words of the Confession above-quoted; yet they never re-baptized any that were baptized in the Church of *Rome*, because she professed the Doctrine of the holy Trinity, and because Baptism is administered in that adorable Name; as also, some other essential Articles of Christianity are held in that Church

by outward visible Profession. Upon this Mr. Currie al-
 ledges, *Vind.* p. 124. "That I should have told, it was also
 because our Reformers lookt upon *Rome's* Ministers to
 have that which was essential to the *Being* of Ministers,
 for all their corrupt Way of entring into the Ministry."
 But I do not think I should have added any such Thing,
 and that because our Reformed Divines account for the Va-
 lidity of Popish Baptism in the same Manner as I do; and,
 if Mr. Currie pleases, he may consult *Calvin's* Instit. Book 4.
 Cap. 15. Sect. 16, & Sect. 20. Mr. Currie will find in the
 last-named Section, that tho' *Calvin* justly condemns *Laick*
 Baptism, yet he tells, That as great a Man as *Augustine*
 doubted if such as were baptized by *Laicks* ought to be re-
 baptized; and *Calvin* does not determine in the Question:
 And Mr. Currie might have known that our Reformed Di-
 vines have not been very forward to determine in it. Again,
 I do not think I should have spoke the Truth, if I had said,
 That the Popish Ministers have that which is essential to
 the *Being* of Ministers; and that because Mr. Currie's Words
 do plainly import that *Ordination* is essential to the *Being* of
 Ministers, which in my Opinion is unsound and erroneous,
 and contrary to the Sentiments of all our Reformed Divines.
 Tho' Mr. *Rutherford*, in the Sense I have above-declared,
 says, *Ordination* makes one essentially a Minister, yet he no-
 where says that *Ordination* is essential to the *Being* of a Mi-
 nister. Neither can it be said that *Ordination* is essential to
 the *Being* of a Minister, and that because, if it is essential
 to the *Being* of a Minister, none can in any Case be a Mini-
 ster of Christ without it: But Mr. Currie himself teacheth
 the contrary Doctrine, in his *Jus Pop. Div.* p. 162. where
 he says, "That such is the Peoples Interest in the Election
 of their Pastors, that their bare Election is enough to make
 one a Minister of Christ, where *Ordination* cannot be had
 according to his Institution." Again, if *Ordination* is
 essential to the *Being* of a Minister, then many of our Refor-
 mers were not Ministers of Christ, and, with them, that great
 Man Mr. *Robert Bruce*, who entred upon the full Exercise
 of his Ministry without *Ordination*, was not a Minister of
 Christ: But, tho' such extraordinary Instances are not Pre-
 cedents for Imitation in ordinary Cases, yet I doubt not to
 affirm, that Mr. Currie's above Doctrine, That *Ordination*
 is essential to the *Being* of a Minister, is unsound; and that
 it is contrary to the Sentiments, and condemned by the Pra-
 ctice, of Reformed Divines; as also, that Mr. Currie in his
 above Assertion contradicts the Doctrine taught by himself
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in his *Jus Populi*, when I humbly judge he wrote with more Deliberation. I shall only add upon this Head, That, according to the Doctrine taught by Mr. Currie in this Part of his *Vindication*, Jesuite Priests, yea, the whole of the Antichristian Clergy, together with Intruders and Simoniacks, must be held and acknowledged by the Church as her lawful and sent Ministers, because they have Ordination, which is supposed to be *essentially valid*. But this, for the Reasons I have given, appears to me to be erroneous and unsound, and contrary to the Sentiments of the Reformed Churches, as the same are well expressed in the above-quoted Article of our Confession. The Reason why I have mentioned *Simoniacks* is, Because I doubt if Mr. Currie can purge the present Intruders in *Scotland* of Simoniackal Entries. One Thing is notour, that a considerable Sum must be paid, as the common Fees, for *Royal Presentations* their passing the Seals; Mr. Currie may try if he can free this Practice of *Simony*.

My Reasonings upon the present Head are concluded with two Questions, which I put to Mr. Currie, Def. p. 126. The first is, Whether or not such as are intruded into the Office of the Ministry, or who are appointed Ministers over dissenting and reclaiming Congregations, should be received and acknowledged by the Church as lawful and sent Ministers of Christ, while they justify their Intrusions, and give no Evidences of sincere Repentance for the same? Unto the above Question Mr. Currie makes the following Answer, *Vind.* p. 128. "They may be acknowledged as Ministers of the Catholic Church of Christ, but I cannot look on them as the lawful Ministers of that Congregation, where the Body of the *Christian People* have justly and upon sufficient Grounds opposed their *Settlements*: Their Want of Repentance may flow from Want of Conviction of their Sin; and they may be acknowledged as the lawful Ministers of such in that Congregation as have called them."

Mr. Currie's Answer to my Question gives me Occasion to make the following Observes; 1st, I grant that Want of Repentance in Intruders may flow from their Want of a Conviction of their Sin; But, will Mr. Currie say, that their Want of this Conviction does arise from the Want of sufficient Means of Light for that End? Or, does Mr. Currie think, when Intruders are not sensible of their Sin, that their Blindness or Stupidity is sufficient to remove the Scandal and Offence they have given by their corrupt Entries into the Ministry? If this is Mr. Currie's Doctrine, let him tell it

but plainly, and then I will be in no Strait to prove that he is likewise unsound and erroneous in this Particular. 2dly, According to Mr. Currie's above Answer, an Intruder may be acknowledged a Minister of the Catholick Church, when yet he owns he cannot look upon him as the *lawful Minister* of that *Congregation* into which he is intruded. But I ask Mr. Currie, Why he cannot look upon him as lawful Minister of that Congregation? Mr. Currie must answer, according to his above Words, It is because the Body of the Christian People have upon sufficient Grounds opposed his *Settlement*. If I should ask Mr. Currie further, Is not the *Presbytery's* Authority, appointing him *Minister* of that *Congregation*, sufficient to make him *their* lawful Minister? Mr. Currie must still answer in the Negative, for his Reasons above given. But I ask again, Why does not the *Presbytery's* Authority, interposed in this Matter, make the Intruder the lawful Minister of this particular Congregation? For my Part, I humbly judge, it is because the Laws and Institutions of the Head of the Church are counteracted, it is because the *Covenant of Levi* is corrupted in this particular Instance, and consequently the Intruder has given just Ground of Offence to the Church by his Manner of Entry into the holy Ministry. 3dly, Is not every particular *visible Church* a Part of the *Catholick Body*? Or, does not every particular *Church* stand in Relation to the *Catholick*, as a Part unto the Whole? Hence a scandalous Entry into the holy Ministry, not only affects that particular Congregation into which one is intruded, but also the whole *Catholick Body*; unless Mr. Currie will say, that the transgressing of the Laws and Institutions of Christ may be just Ground of Scandal and Offence to one Part of the Body, and not to the Whole; and, if he says so, I affirm he overthrows the *Unity* of the *Catholick Church*, and consequently that he is unsound in this Particular also. And therefore, for the above Reasons, when Mr. Currie tells his Reader, that an Intruder may be a lawful Minister of the *Catholick Church*, and yet not a lawful Minister of *that Congregation*; as I humbly judge this is a new-coined Distinction, so the Design and Tendency of it is to blindfold and hoodwink simple well-meaning People and to bring them to a tame Submission to the Ministry of *Intruders*, when a more particular and special Testimony is lifted up at this Time against the Course of Violence that is practised upon the Lord's Heritage in *Scotland*. 4thly, Mr. Currie in his above Answer affirms, That Intruders may be acknowledged "as the lawful Ministers of such in that

" Congregation as have called them ; " that is, they may be acknowledged as lawful Ministers to the Patron, an Heritor or two, or to a few of the Congregation. This appears to me to be both new and inconsistent Doctrine: Mr. Currie should have rather told his Reader, that he gives up with our *Parochial Order*. Do not all our Presbyterian Divines own that every Parochial Church is a particular visible Church? And, are not Intruders by the Authority of the Presbytery appointed Ministers over that particular visible Church? But according to Mr. Currie's Doctrine, if the Intruder be a lawful Minister to such as have called him, then a Patron, and two or three Heritors, with a few in the Congregation, make up a particular visible Church: And consequently we must either have a particular visible Church within a particular visible Church; or else such as will not submit to the Intruder as their lawful Minister, must be reckoned Renters and Dividers of that particular Church. This is indeed agreeable to the Doctrine advanced by the *modest and humble Inquirer and his Fellows*, whose Pen I conceive Mr. Currie has borrowed upon the present Argument; but whether he is consistent with himself or with our Presbyterian Principles, in his Reasonings, I shall leave it to the Reader to judge.

A second Question which I put to Mr. Currie, Def. p. 126 is, Whether or not Gospel-ordinances, dispensed by such as are neither lawful nor sent Ministers of Christ, have that *Rectitude* or *Purity* in their Administration which the Divine Institution requires? Unto which he answers, *Vind. p. 128*. " I think, *Gospel-ordinances* dispensed by such as are " neither lawful nor sent Ministers of Christ, and such as " have usurped the Office, without either the *Peoples Call* " or *Presbytery's Ordination*, may have that *Rectitude* and " *Purity*, both as to the *Matter* and *outward Form*, which the " Divine Institution requires; tho' I do not think their *Adminis-* " *trations* are valid, wanting the *Presbytery's Ordination* " which in my Opinion, in ordinary Cases, is absolutely " needful to constitute one a lawful Minister of Christ."

As to Mr. Currie's above Answer, I grant him, that Ordinances dispensed by Intruders and Usurpers of the Ministerial Office may have a Rectitude and Purity as to the *Matter*; but then, I refuse that they have that Rectitude and Purity as to the *outward Form* which the Divine Institution requires; and my Reason is, That tho' I cannot conceive what Mr. Currie understands by the Terms *outward Form*, yet, according to any Understanding I have of the above Terms, I

used in the present Argument, I humbly judge, that a lawful Vocation unto the Work of the Ministry is requisite unto the *outward Form*, and so unto the pure Administration of Gospel-ordinances: And therefore, tho' a Man should deliver sound Doctrine, tho' he should dispense the Sacraments without any Mixture of human Inventions, if he has not the ordinary outward Call, his Administrations want that Purity and Rectitude, as to their outward Form, which the Divine Institution requires. Such Men who want the ordinary outward Call, they run unsent; and *no Man ought to take this Honour unto himself, but he that is called of God, as was Aaron*. And whereas Mr. Currie affirms, That the Administrations of Intruders, &c. are not valid if they want the *Presbytery's Ordination*. He appears to me in this to be unsound likewise, and that because the Word *Presbytery* imports a College of *Presbyters*; but our Reformed Divines have always sustained the Administrations of such to be valid, who have been ordained by one single Man: As for Instance, the Administrations of such as are ordained by the *Diocesan Bishop* are still sustained as valid, tho' I think they have not that Purity and Rectitude as to their *outward Form* which the Divine Institution requires, while they justify their corrupt Manner of entring into the holy Ministry. And altho' I am of Opinion, that the *Presbytery's Ordination* is needful, in ordinary Cases, to constitute one a lawful Minister of Christ; yet I will not say it is *absolutely needful* to render the Administrations valid: I doubt if Mr. Currie himself will reckon the Administrations of such of the *Sectarian* Party invalid, who content themselves with *Election*, and refuse the *Presbytery's Ordination* unto the Office of the Ministry.

As for the Case of Mr. *Whitefield*, and others in the Church of England, who, *says he*, never had such a Call as Mr. *Wilson* requires; I answer, There is a vast Difference, as I have already observed, betwixt ordinary Cases and extraordinary, as that of Mr. *Whitefield's* appears to be: Also, there is a great Difference betwixt the Case of such who are pointing towards Reformation, and that of others who are *settled upon their Lees*, and refuse to be reformed. Mr. *Whitefield* gives satisfying Evidences to the Churches of Christ, that he lies open to Light, and is pointing towards Reformation; And may the Lord, who I hope has shined into his soul, and given him some clear Discoveries of the Doctrines of Justification and Salvation by the free Grace of God, through the imputed Righteousness of our Lord Jesus, enlighten him more and more; and particularly, with respect

to the Worship, Order and Government of the House of God, the Spiritual Kingdom of our glorious *Immanuel* whose peculiar Prerogative it is, to give Laws, Ordinances and Officers to his own House, as also Instructions and Directions with respect to the Manner of their Entry to their respective Offices !

Mr. *Currie* thinks fit in the foresaid Page to put the following Question unto me, " Whether could one be a lawful Minister of Jesus Christ, and administrate Sacraments so as they shall be right Sacraments, albeit he had accepted of a Call, where there were only Heritors and Elders, a third Part of the People with a Majority of the Presbytery for his Ordination and Settlement in that Parish ? " To which I briefly answer, If, as the Question supposes, the Majority of the People are against his Settlement, then, according to Mr. *Currie* in his *Jus Divinum* above-quoted, such an one enters by the *wrong Door*, yea, he is not free of the Guilt of *running unsent*. Mr. *Currie* adds, that he hopes I will not refuse, that one having special Grace may labour under such an Error as to think he might accept of a Call in the Manner mentioned. I answer, That I will not refuse this ; but then I affirm, that Mens State, whether gracious or not, is not the Rule by which we are to determine the outward and ordinary lawful Call to the holy Ministry. As I do not reckon a gracious State essential to the *Being* of a Minister, so neither do I think that the Supposition, that one is in a State of Grace, does oblige the Church to receive and acknowledge him as a lawful and sent Minister of Christ, if he has not the ordinary outward Call to the Work and Office of the Ministry ; and if Mr. *Currie* thinks that a Man's Ignorance of the Error of his Way, or his continuing in that Ignorance, suppose he may be in a State of Grace, is a sufficient Warrant for the Church to receive him as a lawful and sent Minister, I must look upon this as another of his erroneous Principles. I shall not question that some of the *Jansenist* Ministers, who are more sound upon the Doctrine of Grace than the rest of the Popish Clergy, may be in a gracious State ; but yet I affirm, that, while they continue in Conjunction with their Antichristian Head, they ought not to be acknowledged by the Church as lawful and sent Ministers of Christ.

I conclude this Subject, *Def. p. 126.* with a Quotation from Mr. *Durham*, which Mr. *Currie* thinks nothing to the Purpose : And why ? Because, *says he*, " Intruders have at least the outward Form of a Call, and cannot be said

“ to run unsent, when authorised by Judicatories of Christ
 “ to preach the Gospel, by which they are made Ministers
 “ of the Catholick Church.” Here again Mr. *Currie* contradicts himself; for according to Mr. *Park*’s above Words, which Mr. *Currie* quotes with Approbation, Intruders are not free of the Guilt of *having run unsent*: And I have sufficiently proven above, that they have not that outward Form of a Call which Divine Institution requires. After Mr. *Currie* has thrust in the Author of *Plain Reasons*, he accuses me of omitting some of Mr. *Durham*’s Words, by which (*says he*) the Reader might have seen that Mr. *Durham* is plainly against me. But I refuse Mr. *Currie*’s Charge as unjust; and if he had dealt justly with me, and fairly with the Reader, he ought to have told plainly what the Words are which I have omitted: But Mr. *Currie* slips over a considerable Part of the Quotation from Mr. *Durham*, particularly when Mr. *Durham* tells us, That such are to be accounted to speak without God’s Commission, who have had a warrantable Call to the Ministry, yet “ by palpable Defection from the Truth, and Commission given them in that
 “ Call, have forfeited their Commission, and so are no more
 “ to be accounted Ambassadors for Christ, or Watchmen
 “ of his Flock, than a Watchman of the City is to be accounted an Observer thereof, when he hath publickly
 “ made Defection to the Enemy, and taken on with them.” I wish Mr. *Currie* may seriously consider the above Words, which he reckons nothing to the Purpose: For my Part, I cannot but reckon such who, as Mr. *Currie* speaks, are guilty of *impious Robbery, Sacrilege and Rapine*, and who refuse to confess the Truths of Christ in Opposition to the Injuries and Indignities that have been done the same, and who are guilty of an habitual Series and Tract of Tyranny in the Administration, and who continue to justify themselves in all these; I say, I cannot but reckon that such have made palpable Defection from the Truth, and the Commission given them in their Call, as is above-express’d: And that this is the State of Matters with the present Judicatories, in their Ecclesiastical Capacity, I have already evinced in the two preceeding Sections compared with the *Defence*.

I have insisted too long upon this Head; but I thought it necessary, both for the Information of such as are willing to receive Light, and for the Direction of the Lord’s People in their Practice in this cloudy and dark Day. I shall endeavour more Brevity on the following Heads, because, if I should

Should pursue Mr. Currie after the same Manner in the Question before me, I might soon exceed his voluminous *Production*.

S E C T. IV.

Wherein it is shown, that the present Judicatories continue in a Course of Defection, and refuse to be reformed, tho' the ordinary Means have been used to reclaim them.

AS the Argument for Secession is laid in the Beginning of this Chapter, it is stated in the following Manner: When a particular visible Church do, in their *Ecclesiastical* or *Judicative* Capacity, go on in a Course of Defection from Reformation-purity once attained unto, and will not be reformed, after the ordinary Means have been used to reclaim them; then, and in this Case, the *minor Part*, tho' but very few in Number, may, yea, ought to depart from Church-communion with the *backsliding Part*; and such as are Office-bearers may warrantably exercise the Keys of Government and Discipline in a *distinct Capacity* from the *Majority*, who are the *backsliding Part*. In order to illustrate the Argument, it remains that I enquire a little into that Branch of the same, wherein it is subsum'd, That the ordinary Means have been used to reclaim the present Judicatories from their proceeding in a Course of Defection, but that such Means have been used in vain, and that they continue to go on in their backsliding Course, in Opposition to all the Means that have been and are used to reclaim them.

In the historical *Narrative*, which I give in Introduction to the *Defence*, I take notice of the particular Means by which the Judicatories were dealt with, to stop their Course, and to return to our Reformation-standards. I am not here to repeat what was said in the above-mentioned Introduction; but only to notice, that, immediately before the Secession was declared, they were dealt with, by a Protestation for Exoneration, entred before the Assembly 1733, and likewise by the Representations that were given in to the Commission of the said Assembly, at their Meeting *August* thereafter: But, notwithstanding of these Means, they persisted in their sinful Course, they thrust out the protesting Ministers from Ecclesiastical Communion with them; whereby they did upon the Matter declare, that they would regard none of the Means that were used for reclaiming them. The Means

were

were used for healing them, but they would not be healed ;
 yea, they cast some of us out, because we used such Means :
 Therefore we were obliged to leave them, and to go out
 from Ecclesiastical Communion with them. The Testimony
 against them being now lifted up in a Way of Secession from
 them, it is another Call given them to return to the Lord,
 to remember from whence they have fallen, and to repent ;
 this Call was intimate unto them in a very publick and solemn
 Manner, when the *Associate Presbytery* did read their Act and
 Declinature in Presence of the Assembly 1739. But, if the
 present Judicatories will still continue to justify themselves
 in their Iniquities and Backslidings, both we and the whole
 Land have Ground to fear, that a righteous and holy God
 may be provoked to say, *Shall I not visit for these Things ?*

The above-mentioned Protestation for Exoneration bears,
 That the protesting Ministers had a very great Regard for
 the Judicatories of this Church : Therefore Mr. *Currie* ar-
 gues, *Vind.* p. 157. That if the said Ministers had a very
 great Regard for the Judicatories at that Time, then there
 was no Ground for Secession from the established Church
 when the said Protestation was entred. But from what I
 have observed in the preceeding second Chapter, and from
 what is hinted above, the judicious Reader may see how
 little Weight there is in Mr. *Currie's* Argument. There is
 one Thing that, Mr. *Currie* should observe, comes into the
 Argument for Secession from the present Judicatories, and
 which he always slips over, and that is, Their obstinate Re-
 fusals of all the Means that were used to reclaim them ;
 which they did manifestly discover, in thrusting the pro-
 testing Ministers out from them, merely for a *Protestation* for
Exoneration, and their refusing to retract the same : And the
 Judicatories have not to this Day condemn'd this Iniquity ;
 nay, so far from it, that the Assembly 1734, in their Remit
 to the *Synod of Perth*, bind up the said *Synod* from judging
 of the *Legality* or *Formality* of the Proceedings of the Judi-
 catories in relation to the protesting Ministers, and from ap-
 proving or *censuring* the same.

Mr. *Currie* continues likewise to harp upon some Expres-
 sions contain'd in one of our Representations given in to the
 Commission *August* 1733. The Expressions are ; " Why
 " our Mother's Sons are so very angry with us, as to threaten
 " to cast us out of the Lord's *Vineyard*." Says Mr. *Currie*,
 If she was then the Lord's *Vineyard*, notwithstanding of the
 Act 1733 and all her other Faults, she is not worse now as
 she was then, *Vind.* p. 159. Such Reasonings appear to me
 not

not to deserve any Notice. I can safely say, The Assembly 1740 have done what lies in their Power to cast the Seceding Ministers out of the Lord's *Vineyard*; yet it will never follow, that, by saying so, I acknowledge the present Judicatories to be lawful and right-constitute Courts of Christ.

Mr. Currie, from his above-mentioned or the like Reasonings, tells his Reader, *Vind.* p. 157. "That to him it is clear to a Demonstration, that, for all the Faults of the Judicatories, the Brethren had never thought of a *Secession*, had not the Assembly actually cast some of them out." Upon which I observe; To me it is very clear, that Mr. Currie is too *daring* and *bold*, when he determines that the Brethren would never have *thought* upon a *Secession* except in the Event mentioned. I humbly judge, that to determine what Men's Thoughts would have been, or would not have been, upon any supposed Event, is the Prerogative of Him who only knows all Things *in Himself* that are either *possible* or *future*. Altho' I will not take it upon me to determine what the Thoughts of the Brethren would have been, in case the Event mentioned had not fallen out; yet I judge there was too much Ground given for a *Secession* from the present Judicatories before the Brethren were actually *cast out*, as I have observed in the *Introduction* to the *Defence*. Likewise, I'll venture to say, That the *Ejection* of the Brethren, an Event which came to such a narrow Point as the *Moderator's* casting Vote, tho' in itself a very wicked and sinful Deed, yet it has been, according to the wise Counsel and Purpose of Him who worketh all Things according to the Counsel of his own Will, and by his particular and adorable Providence, overruled to such good Ends and Purposes, which, it is very probable, neither the present Judicatories nor the protesting Ministers had thought upon; and, amongst others, it has brought Help and Relief to severals of the Lord's scattered Flock and Heritage through the Land; it has likewise brought forth a *judicial Testimony* to Scotland's Covenanted Reformation, and against a manifest Course of *Defection* from the same.

Mr. Currie having in his *Essay*, p. 6. told his Reader, That he hopes that the Judicatories are not *vastly worse* since the Year 1733, when the Brethren entred their *Protestation* for *Exoneration* against the Deed of Assembly the said Year: Therefore, *Def.* Chap. 2. Sect. 6. I give several Instances to shew, that, since the foresaid Time, the Judicatories by their Proceedings and Conduct are *vastly worse*; and that, instead of shewing a Disposition for removing the Grounds

of Seceſſion, they do from Time increaſe and ſtrengthen the ſame. Two of the Inſtances which I give did take place immediately after the foreſaid *Proteſtation* was entred; and the other Inſtances which I give have taken place ſince the Seceſſion was declared. Since Mr. *Currie* makes ſome Exceptions unto the Inſtances which I give, I ſhall only take notice of two or three of them, and ſhew how little Ground there is for the Exceptions Mr. *Currie* makes unto them.

The firſt two Inſtances I give, to ſhew that the Judicatories were *worſe* after the *Proteſtation* againſt the Aſſembly 1733 was entred, are, the Act and Sentence of the ſaid Aſſembly againſt the Proteſting Miniſters, and the arbitrary Execution of the ſame by their Commiſſion. Upon the foreſaid Act and Sentence paſt by the Aſſembly, *Def.* p. 159. ſay, "I doubt if Mr. *Currie* ſhall find a Parallel to this extraordinary Sentence ſince our Reformation from *Popery*, whereby four Miniſters were thruſt out from Communion with the Judicatories, on account of a Proteſtation for their juſt and neceſſary *Exoneration*." Upon this ſays Mr. *Currie*, *Vind.* p. 160. "If Mr. *Wilson's* Memory has failed him in this, he may remember what I doubt not he knew before, *namely*, That in 1651, which was near 100 Years after our Reformation from *Popery*, the Aſſembly at *Dundee* did not only ſuſpend or caſt out, but actually depoſed, four worthy Miniſters—for proteſting againſt that Aſſembly, &c." But I doubt not that Mr. *Currie* knows very well, that the Miniſters who were depoſed in 1651 were not depoſed for a Proteſtation for *Exoneration*, as was the Caſe in 1733; but they were depoſed for a *Proteſtation* and *Declinature*, diſowning the Authority and Conſtitution of the ſaid Aſſembly. I have given Inſtances in the *Defence*, that Mr. *Currie* ſometimes diſguiſes Matters of Fact; and this is another Inſtance of this Kind: The Caſe above-mentioned, in the Year 1651, is quite different from the Caſe 1733. And I ſtill affirm, that Mr. *Currie* cannot give a Parallel to the Conduct of the preſent Judicatories ſince our Reformation: There was never ſuch an Act of Tyranny exerciſed, whereby four Miniſters were thruſt out from *Ministerial* Communion, merely for a *Proteſtation* for *Exoneration*. The worthy Miniſters who were depoſed in the Year 1651 were depoſed for declining the Authority of a pretended Aſſembly at *Dundee*, and, in this Reſpect, the Caſe was parallel unto the Caſe of the Seceding Brethren in the Year 1739; but, with this Difference, that the *Declinature* in the foreſaid Year was a *judicial Act and Deed*, whereas that in

the Year 1651 was an *extrajudicial Deed*. I may also add, that the Declinature in 1739 was upon a broader Foundation and Ground than that in the Year 1651: However, from the Practice of the worthy Ministers in the Year 1651, one of whom died a Martyr for our Covenanted Principles, *viz.* Mr. *James Guthrie*, we may see that it is not unprecedented in this Church, to decline the Authority and disown the Constitution of such *Assemblies* as are not constitute in a right and lawful Manner. We may also see a Precedent for such Ministers continuing in the Exercise of the Office of the Ministry, who are suspended, cast out, or deposed by *pretended Assemblies*.

The other Instances I give, that the present Judicatories are much worse in their Conduct and Procedure, have taken place since the *Secession* was declared November 1733; particularly, *Def.* p. 160. their continuing to authorise, support or countenance the violent Settlement of Ministers, either upon the Footing of the Patronage-act, or the repealed Act 1732. I give several Examples of this. Tho' Mr. *Currie* continues to justify his Assertions, *viz.* That *some Stop* has been put to *violent Intrusions*, and that a *considerable Stop* has been put to them for some Time bygone, *Essay*, p. 6, 30. yet he cannot refuse that several of the Instances I mention are such, whereby *violent Intrusions* were either *authorised*, *countenanced* or *supported*. But as to some others of them he affirms *Vind.* p. 161. That there was no violent Intrusion in the Case particularly the Settlement of the Parish of *Perth* with Mr. *David Black*. This Settlement I reckon among the violent Settlements, *Def.* p. 161. where I assert, "That it was upon the Footing of the Act 1732, when the Majority of the Elders were dissenting from the said Settlement, and a *constitute Session* reclaiming against the same before all the Judicatories of the Church." But says Mr. *Currie*, "It was no violent Intrusion, tho' there was the small Majority of one Elder against it." But in this Mr. *Currie* is misinformed: For there were Fourteen Elders against it, and only Twelve for it; consequently, there was a Majority of Two Elders: Likewise, the Session being orderly and regularly met, one of the Ministers did always preside in their Determinations and Resolutions against the said Settlement. Another Reason Mr. *Currie* gives, to shew that this Settlement at *Perth* was not a violent Intrusion, is That according to his Information, "to balance the force of the said small Majority of Elders against Mr. *Black's* Call there was a Majority of Sixteen of the Magistracy and Council

“ for the same ; and likewise, beside the Heritors not of our Communion, there was a Majority of Heritors for it ; ” and therefore he does not reckon it a violent Intrusion. But then, according to Mr. Currie’s Information, Mr. Black’s Call was purely upon the Footing of the Act 1732 ; and, if Mr. Currie is consistent with himself in his former Writings, he will never make it appear that a Settlement purely upon the Footing of the Act 1732 is not a violent Settlement. Mr. Currie adds, “ There may be a Majority of the Elders against a Call, and yet the Person called have God’s Call and his Peoples.” But this is nothing to the present Purpose ; in regard I may upon as good Grounds say, That there may be a Majority of a Town-council and Heritors for a Call, and yet the Person called want God’s Call and his Peoples ; and, if Mr. Currie is consistent with himself in his former Writings, he cannot refuse this. Mr. Currie subjoins, “ Considering the good Character Mr. Wilson used to give of the Candidate before that Settlement came under Consideration, it is thought he might well have spared this, which is no Instance to his Purpose.” To which I reply, That, tho’ I should give the greatest Character unto any Man, I do not think that this does oblige me to be silent from testifying against his Settlement, if his After-settlement is not agreeable to the Rules of the Gospel : And therefore I thought it my Duty to mention this, amongst the other Instances which I give of the violent Settlements that have taken place, and which have been authorised by the present Judicatories, since the Secession was declared.

Mr. Currie, it seems, thinks he had not said enough, in the Page of his *Vindication* above-quoted, concerning the Settlement of Perth ; therefore, amongst his *Addenda*, Vind. p. 341. he says, “ Since writing what is above, I have had Information, which I doubt not may be depended upon, that as there was a great Majority of the Town-council of Perth, with a Majority of Heritors, and Heritors of our Communion ; so also there was a considerable Majority of the Heads of Families for Mr. David Black’s Call ; The whole Presbytery except one Minister and an Elder, the whole Synod, and almost the whole General Assembly, were for it. And seeing Mr. Wilson objects nothing upon this Head, nor has made the least Insinuation of the Settlement’s being made contrary to the Mind of the Congregation ; this says undoubtably, and without Dispute, there hath been, if not a Majority, yet at least an equal Number of Heads of Families also for that

" Settlement." But since Mr. Currie's above Information is far from being distinct and full, and since it is, as I doubt not, upon Design sent abroad unto the World; I judge it my Duty to give a more particular Information with respect to some Steps that were taken towards the Settlement mentioned. 1^{mo}, Before the Settlement of the Parish of Perth came under the Session's Consideration, the Magistrates and Town-council did by a *Vote* declare themselves in open Council for Mr. Black as their Minister. 2^{do}, After the Majority of the Council had declared themselves by a *Vote* as above, such of the Members of Town-council as were Members of Session applied the Session, that they might join the *Town-council* in a Petition to the *Presbytery* for the Moderation of a Call; but, finding that the Session were not ripe for such a Step, the *Town-council* resolved by themselves to apply the *Presbytery*. 3^{tio}, In consequence of the above Resolution, the *Town-council* did, without the Concurrence of the *Session*, petition the *Presbytery* for the Moderation of a Call. 4^{to}, The *Session*, having by a considerable Majority found that they were not ripe for a Moderation, did at the same Time petition the *Presbytery* for a Delay. 5^{to}, The Moderation of a Call was granted upon the sole Application of the *Town-council*, when the *Session* at the same Time had declared they were not ripe. 6^{to}, After the *Presbytery* had granted the above Petition of the *Town-council*, the *Session* appointed the Elders and Deacons to go through their several Quarters, and to enquire at the Heads of Families or Householders, whom they inclined should be their Minister, whether Mr. David Black, or a Reverend Minister who was also at that Time named, leaving it at the same Time to the Heads of Families to propose any other they pleased; and the Elders and Deacons were also appointed to bring in to the Session an exact List of the Heads of Families who were for one or other of the Persons named, or who should propose any other Person to be their Minister: And, in the said Enquiry, it was appointed, that Heads of Families or Householders, without Distinction of Male or Female, if there was no Male Head of the Family, should be enquired; no Exception was made, except of such who were under Process for Scandal, or who did not attend Gospel-ordinances dispensed by the Ministers of Perth. 7^{mo}, When the several Elders and Deacons made their Report to the Session, the Session found, that the Majority of Heads of Families and Householders had declared themselves for another than Mr. David Black to be their Minister. But,

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since this Sentence of the Session was controverted, I shall not here insist upon it; and, since Mr. Currie says that Mr. Wilson objects nothing against his Information, upon this Head I shall only tell him, that Mr. Wilson read and gave in to the Session, a short Time before Mr. David Black's Settlement, a Declaration containing his Reasons why he could neither own Mr. David Black as his Colleague in the Work of the Ministry, nor join in Session with him. And in his said Declaration, when giving his Mind upon the Head mentioned by Mr. Currie, he expresses himself in the following Terms; "I must here observe, that when I consider that the Town-council did by a Vote declare themselves for Mr. David Black before ever the Case was brought before the Session, as also that they did apply for a Moderation before ever the Congregation were enquired into, I cannot but judge the Concurrence so much spoke of (to wit, with Mr. Black's Call) was very much influenced by the foresaid Deeds; and therefore, as I am not satisfied that the said Mr. Black is the Choice of the Majority of the Congregation, so it does not appear to me that he is the free Choice of all and every one of them who have declared themselves for him." And I can safely add, that if (according to Mr. Currie's Principles, as they are laid down in his *Jus Divinum*) the above-mentioned Enquiry had been confined to Male Communicants, a great Majority had been found against Mr. Black's Settlement.

Mr. Currie thinks fit to subjoin another Piece of Information given him concerning the Settlement of Perth: Says he, "I am certainly informed, Mr. Black's Settlement was made upon the same Footing on which Mr. Wilson's own Settlement and all other Settlements since the Revolution have been made in the Town of Perth, and without the least Regard to the Act 1732." But I can assure Mr. Currie that he is certainly misinformed, in regard there was never a Settlement in Perth since the Revolution, that proceeded upon the sole Application of the Town-council for the Moderation of a Call; and also, that there has been no Settlement in Perth since the Revolution, where the Session did not apply the Presbytery for a Moderation; and this the Session found by a Committee of their Number, who were appointed to search the Session-register as far back as the Revolution. I can also inform Mr. Currie, that there were several considerable Differences betwixt the Footing upon which Mr. Black was settled, and Mr. Wilson's Settlement; such as, *namely*, In Mr. Wilson's Settlement, the Session did unanimously apply

apply the *Presbytery* for the Moderation of a Call; but, in Mr. *Black's* Settlement, the Case was otherwise, as has been observed. 2do, In Mr. *Wilson's* Settlement, the Session did unanimously vote for him, and sign his Call; but, in Mr. *Black's* Settlement, the Majority of the Elders were dissenting and reclaiming against the same. 3tio, In Mr. *Wilson's* Settlement, there was not one in the Congregation dissenting or reclaiming; but, in Mr. *Black's* Settlement, the Case was otherwise, in the Manner I have already observed. 4to, In Mr. *Wilson's* Settlement, not only was there none in the Congregation dissenting or reclaiming, but, as the Colleague Ministers and Elders at that Time owned and declared, the whole Congregation were unanimously desiring the same; but this was not the Case in Mr. *Black's* Settlement, as has likewise been already observed: And therefore Mr. *Currie* may see that his Informations are not always so certain as he apprehends and gives out.

Before I pass this Head of the Intrusion of Ministers, I shall only make a few Observes;

1mo, That as the present Judicatories continue in the Practice of imposing Ministers upon dissenting and reclaiming Congregations, so their Sin in this is highly aggravated; in regard it is done in Face of manifold Representations and Remonstrances to the contrary, both from Ministers, Elders and People through all Corners of the Land: Also, by their Management in this Matter, the Flock and Heritage of God are scattered and broken, and a Door thereby opened for the Settlement of a lax and corrupt Ministry in the Church.

2do, I likewise observe, That the Sin of the Intrusion of Ministers is yet more highly aggravated, when a Testimony is lifted up in a way of Secession from the Judicatories upon the account of their complex Course of Defection from the Lord, and, amongst other Things, upon account of the Violence that is done by them to the Flock and Heritage of God: Therefore, when, notwithstanding of this, they continue in their Transgression, it is a plain Evidence that they are obstinate in their Sin, and that they refuse to be reformed.

3tio, When Mr. *Currie* gives it as his Judgment, *Essay*, p. 30. "That tho' a Person hath been thrust in upon a People in an undue Manner, yet their After-acceptance, Approbation, and Submission to his Ministry, makes him a Pastor to them, supplying the want of Election at first;" Here I observe, that the After-acceptance and Submission of the People to an Intruder does not remove

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the Scandal and Offence that he has given by his undue entering into the holy Ministry ; and however some may please themselves by submitting unto the Ministry of such, yet they are guilty in so far of turning their Back upon a Testimony against the Violence done to the Heritage of God, or against Mens entering into the Ministry by a *wrong Door* ; which, as I observed already in the former *Section*, Mr. Currie acknowledges to be the Case of such as are settled over dissenting and reclaiming Congregations. And surely, all that would cleave to the Lord, and who would follow him fully in a Day of Sinning and Backsliding, ought carefully to notice *the Signs of the Times*, and hold fast the Word of the Lord's Patience, in any particular Instance which the Word and Providence of the Lord calls them unto : And *Intrusions* having now in a particular Manner become the Trial of this Church, and likewise a more solemn Testimony being now lifted up against the same, it is more sinful and dangerous, in any, to depart from or let go a Testimony against *violent Settlements*.

Another Instance which I give in the *Defence*, to shew that the Judicatories are worse since the Secession was declared from them, is the Conduct both of Ministers and Judicatories in the Affair of the *Athenian* Captain Porteous ; and I conclude my Reasonings upon this Head in the following Manner, *Def.* p. 169. " Since by the above-mentioned *Act of Parliament*, and the reading thereof, the present Judicatories of this National Church, as they enjoy the Civil or Legal Establishment, are declared and acknowledged to be subordinate unto the Civil Powers, and since no Testimony has been offered by any of the said Judicatories against this grievous Incroachment upon the Power and Authority of the King of Zion over his own Spiritual Kingdom, it plainly follows, that this Usurpation is submitted unto by the Judicatories of this National Church ; and therefore, by their Submission unto the same, their Constitution is in so far altered and changed, that they cannot be held and esteemed as Courts that are immediately subordinate unto the King of Zion, but as Courts that have changed their Holding, and who have subordinated themselves unto the Civil Powers: Hence it is evident, that they are *vastly worse* than when the Protestation was entred *Anno 1733*."

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Mr. Currie thinks fit to pass over my Reasonings, from which the above Conclusion is drawn. He tells his Reader, *Vind.* p. 166. "That he determines nothing anent the Law-
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"fulness or Unlawfulness of reading the *Act* anent Captain
 "Porteous." And no doubt he thinks that in this he acts a
 wise Part; yet I humbly judge, that, if he had entred into
 the Argument, he ought to have considered what Weight
 and Force is in my Reasonings, for proving that the present
 Judicatories, by their Conduct in this important Affair, have
 changed their Holding of the King of Zion, and have sub-
 ordinate themselves to the Civil Powers in their Ecclesiasti-
 cal Capacity. But, since Mr. Currie has waved the Argu-
 ment, I shall not here further insist upon it; only I must
 observe, that Mr. Currie tells his Reader, *Vind.* p. 165,
 "That seeing the Readers of the *Act* solemnly declare, that
 "had their Views of that *Act* been the same with those of
 "of the *Non-readers*, or that the *Reading* was in the least a
 "Wronging of the Headship of Zion's King, they would
 "rather their Heads had been separated from their Bodies,
 "than been guilty of *Reading*; Charity obliges us to be-
 "lieve that they are ingenuous." But the Professions and
 Declarations that Men may make with respect to their own
 Practice is not the Rule by which we are to judge the same,
 but the *Law* and the *Testimony*. As for Instance, Will
 not the grossest *Erastians* say, If they thought their Prin-
 ciples and Practice were a Wronging of the Headship of the
 King of Zion, they had rather their Heads were separated
 from their Bodies, than maintain such Principles, or hold
 such Practices? And, according to Mr. Currie's Reasoning,
 does not *Charity* oblige us to believe they are ingenuous?
 Consequently we must never testify against their Principles
 or Practice; Why? They do not own such Consequences
 as we draw from the same. And, if we will believe the
Pope of Rome, he will tell you, that he owns Christ to be
 the Sovereign Head of his Church; and if we shall assert
 that he does not, because he pretends to be Christ's *Vicar*
 upon Earth, he will refuse the Consequence, and tell you,
 that, tho' he is Christ's *Vicar*, he owns that Christ is the only
 Head of his Church. All that I here intend is to shew, that,
 when Consequences from Men's Principles or Practice are
 just and native, they ought at least to be testified against, as
 if they were in express Terms adopted by them; as also to
 shew, that Mens Professions or Declarations are not to be
 the Rule of our Judging or Witness-bearing, but the *Law*
 and *Testimony*, or the Principles and Facts themselves are to
 be brought unto the *Law* and *Testimony*, and judged thereby:
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sessions or Declarations they may make of their Regard to the Headship of Christ, yet their Practice ought to be condemned; and the Conduct of the Judicatories is justly chargeable with the above Conclusion which I have made, from the Reasons and Arguments I have advanced, *Def.* p. 165. to 169.

As for the other Instances I give in the *Defence*, to shew that the present Judicatories, instead of setting about Reformation-work since the Secession was at first declared, are obstinately going on in a Course of Defection; I refer the Reader to the *Defence*, from p. 169. to 174. which, if he pleases, he may compare with *Vind.* p. 170, 174. as also, with what I have said in the second Section of this Chapter, concerning the Conduct of the two late pretended Assemblies against the Seceding Ministers. I shall conclude this Section with observing, That as the *Secession* from the present *Judicatories* became necessary and warrantable upon their refusing to be reformed and reclaimed, notwithstanding of the Means that were used to reclaim them; so, while they continue to justify themselves in their Iniquity, while they shew no Evidence of a Disposition towards Reformation, yea, while they add Iniquity to Iniquity in the several Instances which I have given, it is just and warrantable to continue in a State of *Secession* from them, and to testify in this Manner for our received and covenanted Principles, and against the Course of Defection carried on by the present Judicatories, until they return to their Duty. And may the Lord himself *see our Ways* and *heal us*; may he, for this End, pour out his Spirit from on high, that we may all *look upon him whom we have pierced, and mourn*, for the manifold Dishonours and Indignities that have been done him by the Judicatories of his House in Scotland! Until some such Frame and Disposition of Spirit be amongst us, I despair of seeing a desirable Unity and Harmony restored unto us.

S E C T. V.

Containing the Conclusion of the Argument for Secession from the present Judicatories.

I N the preceeding Sections I have evinced, that the present established Church, considered in her Ecclesiastical Capacity, is not a true Church of Christ, according as the

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Terms are taken in our first Confession of Faith ; in regard she doth not confess the Truths of God, formerly received, acknowledged and sworn to by the Church of *Scotland*, in Opposition unto the dangerous Errors that have been broached amongst us, and by which the Scheme of Divine Truth, laid down from the Word of God in our Confession of Faith, is subverted ; as also, in regard she is tyrannical in the Administration of Government and Discipline ; and likewise, because such are authorised, countenanced and supported, in the Administration of Gospel-ordinances, both Word, Sacraments and Discipline, who ought not to be received and acknowledged by the Church as her *lawful* and *sent* Ministers. And from what I have observed in the preceding Section it likewise appears, that this particular *visible Church*, in her *Ecclesiastical* or *Judicative* Capacity, is going on in a Course of Defection, and refuses to stop her Course, or to return to the Lord, tho' the proper and ordinary Means have been used to reform and reclaim her: And therefore I conclude, that the *minor Part*, tho' few in Number, who desire to be found faithful to the Lord, *may* and *ought* to depart from Ecclesiastick Communion with the *backsliding Part*, and that such as are Office-bearers among them *may* and *ought* to exercise the Keys of Government and Discipline, *in a distinct Capacity* from the *Majority* who are the *backsliding Part*, for the Ends and Purposes for which they are given unto the Church by her glorious and exalted Head.

That, in the Case above-mentioned, the *minor Part*, who desire to be found faithful to the Lord, have Divine Right and Warrant to exercise the Keys of Government and Discipline in a distinct Capacity from the *Majority* who are the *backsliding Part*, is, what I humbly judge I have proven, *Def. Chap. 2. Sect. 5.* And I am satisfied the Reader should compare what I have there said, with Mr. C——'s *Vindication*, Chap. 5. Sect. 6. and let him judge for himself, if Mr. Currie has entred into the Argument, or taken off the Force of my Reasonings on this Head.

Beside the Argument for Secession from the present Judicials in the Manner as it is stated above, I have also observed, That sinful Terms of Communion are imposed upon the Ministers and Members of this Church, by the Acts of Assembly 1733 against the protesting Ministers and the Ministers of the Presbytery of *Dunfermline*, *Def. Chap. 2. Sect. 4. p. 127.* But what I mainly intend here is, to notice what I offer for confirming the Argument for *Secession*, upon the following Proposition which I lay down, *Def. p. 62. viz. "I*

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"our Communion or Conjunction with any particular Church binds us up or restrains us from the Discharge of any Duty, which our Station, Office and Character, by the Command of God, does oblige us unto, whether the Restraint that is laid upon us be explicite or more implicite; then, and in this Case, *Secession* from such a particular *visible Church* is necessary and warrantable Duty."

Mr. Currie does not call in question the Truth of the above Proposition. I give some particular Instances in the *Defence*, that the above is the State of Matters in this National Church, as she is represented in her present Judicatories; and, since Mr. Currie makes Exception to the Instances I give, I shall take notice of some of them.

The first Instance I give is, *Def.* p. 132. and 139. viz. "That a judicial Testimony for Truth is a Debt that the Office-bearers of the Church owe both to present and succeeding Generations; and that Ministers of the Gospel particularly, if they would fulfil *that Ministry* which they have received of the Lord, ought not only *doctrinally* to declare the Truths of Christ, but also *judicially* assert them, in Opposition to the particular Errors by which they are subverted in the Times and Places wherein they live: But the present Judicatories have refused to condemn in particular and express Terms several pernicious Errors, by which many important Truths, held forth from the Word of God in our *Confession of Faith*, are opposed and subverted; How then shall the Duty we owe to the Head of the Church, or the Debt we owe to present and succeeding Generations, be discharged? If the *minor Part*, who are sensible of their Duty, continue in Conjunction with the Judicatories, they cannot lift up a *judicial Testimony* for Truth, they cannot by any *judicial Act* or Deed condemn the particular Errors which are vented, or testify particularly against former and present Defections; the *Majority* bear the Keys of Government and Discipline, and the *Minority* cannot exercise them while they continue in Conjunction with them." Mr. Currie, *Vind.* p. 144. owns, that Ministers ought not only *doctrinally* to declare the Truths, but also *judicially* to assert them." Yet, *Vind.* p. 135. he replies to my above Argument in the following Manner; "If the Brethren thought the lifting up of a *judicial Testimony* Duty, then, I dare say, their dealing with Judicatories for such a *Testimony* would be sufficient Exoneration of themselves, at least with entering a Protest that they were free from the Guilt of that O-

"mission." But if it is a positive Duty unto which the Ministers of the Church are obliged, then the Key of Government and Discipline should be exercised according to the Command of God, in lifting up a *judicial Testimony* for Truth; as well as the Key of *Doctrine*, in a *doctrinal* publishing and declaring of the same; especially when the Judicatories of a Church do refuse to discharge this Duty: But if by outward Force and Violence the *minor Part* are hindered from meeting together to discharge this Debt which they owe to present and succeeding Generations, and that Duty which they owe to the Head of the Church, this alters the Case.

Mr. Currie further replies to my above Argument, "If the Brethren thought not their Dealing, in the Manner he has mentioned, sufficient, they might have done as the *Protesters* in the Synod of *Perth and Fife*, when they published their Testimony in 1658, and that would have exonerated them." That is, the Brethren might have contented themselves with an *extrajudicial Testimony*. But, if a judicial Testimony is warranted by the Word of God, if it is a commanded Duty, as I have shown it is, *Def. p. 135, 139*, particularly from the Commands that are given to Ministers *to fulfil the Ministry that they have received from the Lord, and to feed the Flock of God*, which includes a *Feeding* by the Key of Government and Discipline, as well as by the Key of Doctrine; and since, as Mr. Currie owns, a judicial Testimony for Truth is the Duty of Ministers: Then an *extrajudicial Testimony* is not sufficient to exoner them, when the Church is in such a Situation as I have evinced this National Church as represented in her present Judicatories is; especially if the *minor Part*, tho' few in Number, who desire to give Glory to the Head of the Church, by a *judicial* Confessing of him and Witnessing for him, have Access freely and peaceably to meet together. As for the Case of the *Protesters* above-mentioned, Mr. Currie's Argument must run after this Manner: The *Protesters* in the Year 1658 thought themselves sufficiently exonerated with an *extrajudicial Testimony*; therefore it is sufficient for the Exoneration of Ministers in the present State of the Church. But, who may not see the Weakness of this Consequence? It is plain, that the different Periods of the Church, and the different Circumstances into which she is brought, require and bring forth different Ways and Means of Testifying. I shall only add, That if a *judicial Witness-bearing* unto the Truth is required and commanded by the Word of God, as I have shown it is, both in the

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Defence, and in the printed *Letter*; then my Argument stands good, as it is stated above; And therefore I do not think myself obliged to dip into the Question about the Conduct of the *protesting Ministers* in the former Period, or to enquire whether or not the *protesting Ministers* in the Synod of *Fife* and *Perth* ought to have proceeded further than an *extrajudicial Testimony*.

Mr. *Currie* further alledges, That Testimonies ought to be given in the Judicatories without Separation; and that, tho' we are to *contend earnestly for the Faith*, Jude 3. this ought to be done in the Judicatories; and, *Vind.* p. 139. according to *Manton* on *Jude*, we must *contend* for every Truth of God according to its Moment and Weight: Yet "undue Rigours are not to be justified, nor the breaking of Church-fellowship and Communion, and the renting of the Body of Christ." All this is very true; but that which I assert is, That, according to the above Command to *contend for the Faith*, each and all are obliged in their several Stations and Characters, and according to the several Ecclesiastick Offices which they bear, to *contend for the Faith*: Private Christians ought in their Station, and the Office-bearers of the Church ought to *contend* according to their Station; and this is not a vindicating undue Rigours. If the Office-bearers of the Church do not in their judicative Capacity confess the Truths of Christ, what do they more than private Christians? It is true, Ministers by vertue of their Office may doctrinally publish the Truths; but, when there is no more, the Ecclesiastical Body does not confess and acknowledge them. A doctrinal Declaration of the Truths by Ministers *separatim* is but a private Deed, when compared with the Ecclesiastick Body; and, when this is all that is done by Ministers, the Glory of an Ecclesiastical Confession of Christ, and of his Words, is not given unto him. And the Guilt is yet more hainous, not only when Christ is not owned nor confessed by the Body Ecclesiastick, but when the Body Ecclesiastick bear down the Truths of Christ: And this is done, when they refuse to confess him in his Person, Truths and Members, in Opposition to the Injuries that may be done him in these; whereby they draw a Vail over the declarative Glory of the Redeemer; as is the Case with the present Judicatories, in all the Instances I have given, both in the *Defence* and in the former *Sessions* of this *Continuation*. Mr. *Currie* still alledges, That we should testify in the Judicatories; otherwise it is *Division, breaking Church-fellowship, renting* of the Body of Christ. But, who are the Dividers?

viders? Who are the Breakers of Church-fellowship? Whether the *Majority* of an Ecclesiastick Body, who must still be reckoned the Church-representative, and who refuse to lift up a Testimony for Christ in their judicative Capacity; or the *Minority*, who judge it a Duty incumbent upon them, as Office-bearers, to make a joint judicial Confession of Christ, in Opposition to the Injuries done him in his Truths and Members? Mr. Currie, Vind. p. 145. says, "He might tell Mr. Wilson, there is a small Proportion between the judicial Testimony of Four or Eight Persons to a General Assembly." But I told him, Def. p. 138. That Numbers give not Authority or Weight to a Cause of this Nature; it is *Truth* itself on their Side, that gives Weight to their Deed. A *judicial* Testimony, when it is for Truth, has as much Weight in the Hands of Four or Five men in the Name of Christ, as in the Hands of Four or Five hundred. A judicial Testimony for Truth has its Weight from the Cause itself; it has sufficient Weight from the Authority of the Head of the Church, obliging his Office-bearers to feed his Flock, and to teach, not only doctrinally, but *judicially*, all Things whatsoever he hath commanded them; it has sufficient Weight from the Authority of the Lord Jesus, obliging us to confess him and his Words before an adulterous Generation. Mr. Currie tells his Reader, Vind. p. 145. That I insist upon a judicial Testimony *ad nauseam usque*. I take the Meaning of his *Latin* Phrase to be, That my insisting upon a judicial Testimony is *nauseous*: And I verily believe that my insisting upon a *judicial Testimony* is *nauseous* to him, that it is *nauseous* to his Brethren, and *nauseous* to the present Judicatories; the *judicial Testimony* of the *Associate Presbytery* is what has awakned their Rage and Indignation against the *Seceding* Ministers. But, however a judicial Testimony for Truth may be *nauseous* to them all, I can freely challenge Mr. Currie and all his Brethren, if they can refuse it, if it is not a Duty laid by the Head of the Church upon the Office-bearers of his House, in their Ecclesiastical or Judicative Capacity, to confess Christ and his Truths, and to testify judicially against whatsoever is prejudicial thereunto: And, if they shall say that the above is not Duty, they may as well say that the Commands given to Ministers, to feed the Church of God, Acts 20. 28. and to feed the Flock of God, 1. Pet. 5. 7. do not oblige and warrant the Office-bearers of the Church to exercise the Key of Government and Discipline; and I suppose they will get few of our Presbyterian Divines who will join them in this.

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I shall only mention another Thing which the Office-bearers of the Church are obliged by their Office unto, and which cannot be performed in the present circumstance of this established Church, while such as are aggrieved with the Proceedings of the Judicatories continue in Ecclesiastick Conjunction with them, and do not act in a distinct Capacity from them, *viz.* Many Congregations in Scotland are groaning under the Load and Weight of Intrusions; they want faithful Gospel-ministers: But, how can such Ministers as pity their Case, take the proper Steps towards their Help and Relief? How shall they license proper Persons as Probationers for the holy Ministry? Or, how shall they ordain and appoint Ministers over the oppressed Heritage of God, to labour among them in the Work of the Gospel? There is no doing of this, while they continue in Conjunction with the present Judicatories. Thus I have laid the Argument, *Def.* p. 133. To which Mr. Currie replies, *Vind.* p. 136. "Tho' I am sorry ever any Congregation had the least Ground to complain; yet I cannot see what Authority the Brethren have to *license* and *ordain* Ministers through all the Kingdom of Scotland, being neither *Apostles* nor *Evangelists*, nor chosen for *Superintendents* by this National Church. *No Man taketh this Honour to himself, but he that is called of God*, Heb. 5. 4. I humbly think, they have as much Right to go through *England* and *Ireland*, yea, through *Holland, France* and *Germany*, as through the whole Kingdom of Scotland." Mr. Currie says, He is sorry for the State of many Congregations in Scotland; but, what does he for their Help and Relief? It is like he may reason and vote in the Judicatories against some Intrusions, he may speak against them, and profess to lament them; but for all that he does against them, and for all that is done by his Brethren who profess to be sorry for Intrusions, oppressed Congregations must either submit to the Ministry of intruded Hirelings, or continue as Sheep scattered without a Shepherd. And I do not see how the Office-bearers, who profess to be grieved for the above State and Circumstances of the Flock of Christ, can answer for it to the Charge given by the Head of the Church, or to the Church, while they ly by, and do not endeavour to give effectual Help and Relief to the destitute Flock of Christ. The *Seceding Ministers* never pretended to plead the Authority of *Apostles, Evangelists* or *Superintendents* for what they do; neither have they Ground to make Use of any such Plea to support them in their Practice. Mr. Currie may forbear, if he pleases, his sneering

sneering Manner of expressing himself: As the Seceding Ministers are Ministers of the Catholick Church, they might upon a clear and plain Call, go and ordain Ministers in any of the Places he mentions; and as for *England* or *Ireland*, considering the degenerate and broken State of the Churches there, the Seceding Ministers, upon an Invitation to any Place in *England* or *Ireland*, might go and ordain Ministers there, not only by vertue of their Relation to the Church *Catholick*, but also by reason of their nearer Conjunction with *England* and *Ireland*, by vertue of the Oath of God, and the Covenanted Uniformity between the three Nations. As for the Right that the Seceding Ministers have to exercise their Ministry through the whole Kingdom of *Scotland*, answer, 1^{mo}, They have a general Right, as I have said, as they are Ministers of the *Catholick Church*. 2^{do}, They have yet a more especial Right to exercise their Ministry through *Scotland*, by vertue of their Relation to this particular National Church; tho' they have a nearer and more immediate Relation to their own *Congregations*, yet they have also a Relation to that particular *visible Church* whereof they are Members: They are Ministers of this particular *visible Church*, and not of the Churches in *France* or *Germany*. 3^{tio}, They have the Right and Authority, which Mr. Currie asks for, from our National *Confession of Faith* or *Covenant*, whereby all the Members of this particular *visible Church* are bound by the Oath of God, to aid, support and assist one another, in the Defence of our Reformation-Principles, Rights, Privileges and Liberties. If the present Judicatories had not broke through our Covenanted Order and Unity in the many Instances I have given, and particularly in this of the *Intrusion* of Ministers, it had been a disorderly and irregular Practice, in the *Seceding Ministers*, to have ordained Ministers anywhere but in the Bounds of their particular Presbyteries, and in Conjunction with them: But since the Case is otherwise, and since the present Judicatories have broke the Bonds of our Ecclesiastical Union and Conjunction and particularly, since they are carrying on a Course of Defection from our Covenanted Principles, since by their Tyranny in the Administration they are scattering the Flock and Heritage of God, since they do refuse to confess judicially our received Principles, both in Doctrine, Government and Discipline, in Opposition unto the Injuries that are done them. It is the Duty of the Seceding Ministers, yea, they are bound and obliged by the Oath and Covenant of the Lord, which lies upon all the Members of this particular *visible Church*

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according to their several Stations, I say, they are bound to regard the Cries of the Lord's oppressed People through the Land, and particularly the Desires and Petitions of such who declare their Conjunction with the *Associate Presbytery* in the same Confession that they make of the Truths of God, according to the Word of God, and our received subordinate Standards of Doctrine, Worship, Government and Discipline.

As the *Associate Presbytery* have not ordained Ministers any where but among such who have applied them for this Effect, and who have also professed their Conjunction with them, in the same Profession that they make of our Reformed Principles, in Opposition unto the manifest Injuries that have been done the same in present and in former Times; so I do not see how the Ministers of the *Associate Presbytery* can in a Consistency with the Duty they owe to the Head of the Church, or with that Obligation they are under by the Oath and Covenant of the Lord, binding all the Members of this particular visible Church, refuse to hear the Petitions of such as make the foresaid Confession, whether for the Settlement of Ministers among them, or for the occasional Administration of Gospel-ordinances unto them.

Mr. Currie subjoins, *Vind.* p. 136. "If the Brethren make not greater Haste than they have done, 'tis like that oppressed Heritage, which they speak so much of, will be long ere it be relieved, when, in the Space of six Years, they have not ordained except one Person for all the Corners of Scotland." It is true, that, at that Time when Mr. Currie wrote, the *Associate Presbytery* had only ordained one, viz. the late Reverend Mr. John Hunter Minister of the Associate Congregation at *Morbattle*, who laboured for a short Time in the Work of the Gospel, to the very great Comfort and Edification of many of the Lord's People through the Land, and who was soon called home to the Joy of his Lord: But if, in the Space of Time mentioned, the *Associate Presbytery* had only ordained One, it is an Evidence that they have neither been sudden nor forward in the Steps that they have taken; again, if in the said Space they have ordained One, it is more than Mr. Currie or any of his Brethren have done, or can do, for the Relief of the Lord's oppressed Heritage, while they continue in Conjunction with the present Judicatories: And besides, by this Time, as I doubt not Mr. Currie knows, some others are ordained by the *Associate Presbytery*, for the Help and Relief of oppressed, scattered and broken Congregations, as *Stow*, *Lintoun*

and *Kilmaquers*; also the Associate Congregation at *Edinburgh* is lately provided with a Minister: And I hope the said Congregations are comfortably planted, and that the Number of Labourers amongst the Lord's scattered People, and in the Lord's oppressed Vineyard, shall be increased.

As for Mr. *Currie's* Scripture-arguments against the present *Secession*, I refer the Reader to what I have said, *Def.* Chap. 3. Sect. 1. I shall only notice a Scripture-argument which Mr. *Currie* comes often over in his *Vindication*, and to which he frequently makes his Retreat, to prove that our *Secession* from the present Judicatories is unwarrantable; it is laid after the following Manner, *Vind.* p. 141. "*Joseph* of *Arimathea* and *Nicodemus* stayed in Judicatories that were "an Hundred Times more corrupt than can be alledged "against the Judicatories of this Church." He gives several Instances to prove, that those, with whom *Joseph* and *Nicodemus* continued in Conjunction, were much worse than the present Judicatories; such as, The Judicatories where *Joseph* and *Nicodemus* sat, openly denied the Supreme Deity of the Son of God, they openly declared they thirsted to have him murdered, *John* 7. 32, 45. They enacted Laws for excommunicating such as would own Christ, *John* 9. 22, yea, Laws for putting such to Death as owned and spake Good of Christ, *John* 12. 10. But the above Argument, as it is laid, proves too much; therefore it proves nothing at all: According to the above Argument, Men may join in Ecclesiastical Communion with a Church which openly denies the Supreme Deity of the Son of God, for so did the *Jewish Sanhedrim*. But Mr. *Currie* tells us, That an *Arian* Church is a Church of the Devil, and that no Communion is to be kept with such a Church as is professedly *Arian*, *Vind.* p. 50, 51. Likewise, the *Jewish Sanhedrim* established the most wicked and sinful Terms of Communion; for they enacted, That, if any Man should confess Christ, he should be put out of the Synagogue, *John* 9. 22. But Mr. *Currie* owns, that the least sinful Term of Communion is sufficient Ground for Separation from a Church, *Essay*, p. 36. Yea, if Mr. *Currie's* Argument from the Practice of *Joseph* and *Nicodemus* is pushed, the Argument of the *Popish* Church against the *Secession* of *Protestants* from them stands good; all the Arguments that the *Protestants* advance to maintain their *Secession* from the Church of *Rome* may be answered from the Practice of *Joseph* and *Nicodemus*, in their continued Conjunction with the *Jewish Sanhedrim* in the Manner the Argument is above laid; Yea, the Argument comes

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with equal Force against Seceſſion from the moſt corrupt and degenerate Churches that have been or may be upon the Face of the Earth.

Tho' I judge what I have ſaid in the *Section* of the *De-fence* above-quoted is ſufficient to take off the Force of Mr. *Cuvrie's* Argument againſt the preſent *Seceſſion*, as the ſame is ſtated, from the Practice of the Prophets and Saints under the Old Teſtament, and of Chriſt and his Apoſtles under the New, who did not ſeparate from the *Jewiſh* Church, notwithſtanding of all the Corruptions that were among the Members thereof; yet I ſhall add one Obſervation more, namely, That, under the Old-Teſtament Diſpenſation, *Jeruſalem* was the Seat of Worſhip, the Temple was the Place of their ſolemn Worſhip; the Church's publick Profeſſion of the God of *Iſrael*, and the Confeſſion of their Faith in the Promise, was made in and by the *Temple*, and by *their Obſervance* of the poſitive Inſtitutions and Ordinances of Worſhip that were peculiar to the *Temple*: The Ceremonial Law given by *Moses* was eſſential to the State and Conſtitution of the Church under that Diſpenſation, the outward Obſervance thereof was the external Ligament and Bond of their Eccleſiaſtical Union and Conjunction: The Ceremonial Law given by *Moses* had its different and gradual Periods of Force and Efficacy; according to the ordinary Obſervation of our Reformed Divines, the Ceremonial Law was in full Force, Vigour and Efficacy, till the actual Maniſtation of the Son of God in the Fleſh; but, during his perſonal Miniſtry upon this Earth, it was *lan-guiſhing*; after his Reſurrection from the Dead, and the Pouring out of the Spirit at *Pentecoſt*, the Ceremonial Law was *dead*, but, tho' it was *dead*, it was not as yet become *deadly*; therefore we find that *Paul* circumciſed *Timothy*, *becauſe of the Jews in theſe Quarters*, Acts 16 3. But the Ceremonial Law became *deadly* after the Deſtruction of the ſecond *Temple*, and the final Diſperſion of the *Jewiſh* Nation by the *Romans*. The Ceremonial Law, the Ligament and Bond of Union in the Church under the Old-Teſtament Diſpenſation, is now quite aboliſhed, Eph. 2. 15. *Having aboliſhed in his Fleſh the Enmity, even the Law of Commandments contained in Ordinances*. This external Ligament and Bond of Union and Conjunction in the Church under the Old Teſtament being now aboliſhed; under the New-Teſtament Diſpenſation, the external Ligament and Bond of Union unto the whole Church Catholick viſible, is the external Profeſſion of the true Religion, according to our Confeſſion,

Chap. 25. Art. 3. And the external Ligament and Bond of Union in any particular *visible Church*, whether *Presbyterial*, *Provincial* or *National*, is their joint Profession and Confession of the Truths of God, both with respect to the Doctrine, Worship, Government and Discipline of the Lord's House, which any particular Church has laid down, in such *subordinate* Standards which have been received and adopted by that *Church*, as agreeable unto and founded upon the Word of God, the primary Rule and Standard. Upon the Whole, I humbly judge, that a due Consideration of the different States of the Church under the *Old* and *New* Testament is sufficient to remove the Difficulties that cast up from the above-mentioned Practice of *Joseph* and *Nicodemus*; and Mr. *Currie* or any else may see, that as he manages the Argument against the Seceding Ministers, from the fore-said Practice of *Joseph* and *Nicodemus*, he cannot reconcile it with his own Principles, nor with what he himself acknowledges, as above, to be Ground of *Secession* from a Church.

Mr. *Currie* boasts, That the Church of Scotland, as she is represented in her present Judicatories, is a *Reformed Church*; otherwise, says he, "Farewel to all our *Reformed Churches*, "if it be not the *Associate Presbytery*;" *Vind.* p. 190. I shall leave Mr. *Currie* to his Scoffs at the *Associate Presbytery*; they are far from pretending that they are either pure or perfect: But I wish Mr. *Currie* would seriously consider the State of the *Reformed Churches* at this Day, and whether or not there is just Ground to regret, that the *Reformation-Testimony* is very much fallen to the Ground among them, not only in these Things that concern the Worship, Government and Discipline of the Lord's House, but also in Matters of Doctrine, particularly in what concerns the Doctrine of Justification and Salvation by the free Grace of God, thro' the *imputed Righteousness* of our Lord Jesus Christ: This Doctrine shined brightly in Reforming Times; and as it shined clearly and brightly, so also with great Warmth, Power and Efficacy, when the Lord brought his Churches out of *Antichristian Babylon*. It is observed and acknowledged by all such as have any right Discerning of the present State of the Churches, that the Doctrine of Salvation by free Grace is very much veiled and darkened in the Reformed Churches, partly by the Growth and Spreading of the *Arminian* Heresy, and partly by the Falling of the Reformation-Testimony against the *Papish* Doctrine of *Justification* by good Works. With respect to this National Church, the Reformation-Testimony to the Doctrine of

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Grace is in a great Measure fallen to the Ground, as may appear from the several Instances I have given of the Conduct of the present Judicatories in Matters of Doctrine : And if the Acts of the several Assemblies 1720 and 1722, with respect to some Propositions contained in the Book called the *Marrow of Modern Divinity*, as also with respect to the Representation of Twelve Ministers upon the Act of Assembly 1720 ; if, I say, the Acts and Deeds of these several Assemblies are duly and seriously considered, it may be found, that a deep Wound has been given by the present Judicatories to the Reformation-Testimony, as it has been stated against the Church of *Rome*, for the Doctrine of Justification and eternal Salvation by the free Grace of God thro' the imputed Righteousness of our Lord Jesus. I am not here to enquire into the Import, or the Design and Tendency of the Acts above-mentioned, but only to observe, that in the last Clause of the Act 1722, which is said to be explicatory of the Act 1720, the Assembly 1722 declare, That it is of a pernicious and dangerous Tendency to say, " That holy Obedience is not properly a *federal* or *conditional* Mean, nor has any Kind of *Causality*, in order to the obtaining of Glory." When the said Doctrine is declared to be of a pernicious and dangerous Tendency, then it plainly follows, that the Assembly 1722 have declared and affirmed, *That holy Obedience is properly a federal or conditional Mean, and has some Kind of Causality, in order to the obtaining of Glory* ; and this Proposition appears to me, to be a giving up a considerable Branch of the Reformed Testimony as it was stated against the *Causality* of good Works in order to the obtaining of eternal Glory, in Opposition unto the Church of *Rome*. I shall only add, That, when the present State of this National Church is considered, I humbly judge that Mr. *Nisbet*, who is sometimes quoted by Mr. *Currie*, and whom he justly commends as an eminent Christian, and a Saint of great Experience, *Vind.* p. 21. had too much Ground for an Observation that he made in his latter Days to some of his Friends ; when speaking of the Degeneracy of this *National Church* in his Time, he said, That he apprehended, Matters would not be right, till the Lord should bring a Church out of the Bowels of this Church. Tho' I am well assured that it is Fact, that the above Observation was made ; yet I do not bring it, neither will I bring such Observations or Sentiments of any, whether Ministers or private Christians, as an Argument to support the Cause I plead for : Yet I think it may be obvious to any who duly con-
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ders the State of the *Reformed Churches* at this Day, and how low the *Reformation-Testimony* is amongst them, that either the *Reformed Churches* must return to the *Reformation-Standards*, and lift up the *Reformation-Testimony* against that lamentable Degeneracy that has overspread them; or, in order to the carrying on of *Reformation-work*, Churches must be brought out of the *Bowels* of the present Churches. May the Lord himself graciously pour out his Spirit upon all the *Reformed Churches*, that they may return unto the Lord their God! and then shall the *Promise* have its Accomplishment, *Isa. 52. 8. Thy Watchmen shall lift up the Voice, with the Voice together shall they sing: For they shall see Eye to Eye, when the Lord shall bring again Zion.*



C H A P. IV.

Some Remarks upon Mr. Currie's Argument against Secession from the present Judicatories, as the same is stated from the two former Periods of this Church.

MR. Currie argues against the present Secession from the Judicatories, from the Conduct of honest Ministers in the Period before 1638, when, tho' a Course of Defection was carried on by a corrupt Party of the Ministry, yet, as he alledges, the honest Party of the Ministry, during the whole Period from 1596 till 1638, did always contend in a Way of Church-communion with the corrupt Party; they never made any Secession from them, nor did think it Duty to separate and erect themselves into separate Judicatories: And this, he alledges, was the Conduct and Practice of all the honest Ministers, during the foresaid Period; and therefore he concludes, that the present Secession from the Judicatories is unwarrantable and unprecedented. As the Argument is laid after this Manner, *Essay*, p. 12, 13, 14. I have considered the same in the *Defence*, Chap. 3. Sect. 3. where I observe the following Differences betwixt the State of Matters in the Period mentioned, and that of the established Church in the present Period.

1^{mo}, The Course of Defection, from the Year 1596 and downward, was carried on by Threatnings and manifold

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Acts of Force and Violence from the Civil Powers: But the Course of Defection is carried on, in the present Period, by the Judicatories themselves, without any Violence or Force offered or done them; they walk readily and willingly in their backsliding Course and Way; our Ruin is wholly from ourselves, and not from any external Force or Violence, either offered unto us, or done us.

2do, The above-mentioned Course of Defection, during the Period before 1638, was carried on by pack'd Meetings of some corrupt Ministers, with Noblemen and Gentlemen, who usurp'd the Name and Authority of a General Assembly; and not by the Church of *Scotland* in her Ecclesiastical Capacity. Mr. *Forrester* supports me in this Observation, when he tells, in his *Rectius Instruendum*, *Confut. 3. Dial. p. 6.* That "the true Representatives or lawful Assemblies of the Church of *Scotland* never consented to the said Course of Defection." But the Case is otherwise in the present Period. Tho' the Associate Presbytery have found by their Act 1739, and upon the Grounds and Reasons mentioned in the said Act, that the present Judicatories are not lawful nor right-constitute Courts of Christ; yet it cannot be refused that the present National Assemblies consist of Members chosen after the usual Manner, by Presbyteries, Burghs and Universities; and in this Respect the Course of Defection is carried on by the present Judicatories in their Ecclesiastical Capacity.

3tio, Before the Year 1638 there was not an Assembly after that witnessing Assembly at *Aberdeen*, Anno 1605, which was owned by the honest Ministers of that Period, as a lawful General Assembly. From all which it appears, that the Course of Defection, in the Period before 1638, was not carried on by the Church of *Scotland* in her Ecclesiastical Capacity: But the Course of Defection at present is carried on by this established Church in her Ecclesiastical Capacity, in regard her National Assemblies consist of Members chosen after the usual Manner, and in regard Synods and Presbyteries remain in their ordinary Subordination to General Assemblies; therefore this National Church must be considered as one Ecclesiastical Body, carrying on, in her Ecclesiastical Capacity, the present Course of Defection from the Lord, in all the several Instances that I have mentioned in the *Defence*, and in the former Chapter of this *Continuation*.

4to, I shall only add, That, in the Period before 1638, there was a material *Secession* from the corrupt Party; this

is evident from the Paper intitled, *A Short Relation of the State of the Kirk of Scotland since the Reformation of Religion unto the present Time*, published Anno 1638, which bears

“ That the most religious and judicious of the Ministry did
 “ solemnly protest, in Name of the Reformed Kirk of Scot-
 “ land, against the Ratification of the Articles of Perth in
 “ Parliament; whereunto the *most Part* of the particular
 “ Congregations have adhered, and never practised these Ar-
 “ ticles.” And to me it is very plain, that when Ministers
 and Congregations not only refuse Obedience to Acts of As-
 semblies, but likewise disown their Authority and Constitu-
 tion, as was the Case with respect to Perth Assembly and
 other Assemblies of that Period, that this is a real Secession
 from them, or from the corrupt Party who carried on the
 Course of Defection. And, if the above Observations are
 considered, I humbly judge they are sufficient to take off
 the Force of Mr. Currie’s Reasonings against Secession from
 the present Judicatories, as he states the Argument from the
 Conduct of honest Ministers in the Period before 1638.

As the Argument is laid by Mr. Currie against Secession
 from the Judicatories, he affirms, That all the witnessing
 Ministers before 1638 continued in Church-communion with
 the backsliding Party, or that they witnessed in a Way
 of Church-communion, *Essay* p. 13. Upon this Head, I grant
 to Mr. Currie, that it is true, what the Ministers of Perth and
 Fife say in their Testimony, “ That the greatest Part of the
 “ Ministry were carried away with the Course of Conformi-
 “ ty, and were couching with *Issachar* under the Burden.” I
 grant him also the Truth of what he reports from Mr. Baillie,
Vind. p. 205. *The farmost Part in the whole Isle stumbled upon
 that Block of Conformity in more or less.* But tho’ the greatest
 Part couched under the Burden, and tho’ the farmost Part
 stumbled in more or less upon that Block; yet Mr. Baillie’s
 above Words, as also the Words of the Ministers of Fife
 and Perth in their Testimony, plainly bear, that a great Part
 did neither in more nor in less stumble upon that Block of
 Conformity. I doubt not but many Ministers, who were ho-
 nest in the main, couched under the Burden; but then a
 considerable Number were kept from Conformity either in
 more or in less: And therefore I refuse what Mr. Currie al-
 ledges, viz. That the witnessing Ministers, during that Pe-
 riod, witnessed always in a Way of Church-communion
 with the corrupt Party. Mr. Currie, to prove his Assertion
 in his *Essay*, p. 178. names Seven eminent witnessing Mini-
 sters, who, he says, together with others, continued to testi-

fy in a Way of Church-communion from 1610 to 1637: But I refuse that any of the Ministers, he mentions, remained in Synods after 1610; and I give my Reasons for this, *Def.* p. 215, 216. which Mr. Currie does not answer. He owns, *Vind.* p. 216. That as to Masters *Andrew* and *James Melvills*, two of the Ministers he names, his mentioning them was thro' a mere Mistake either of the Printer or the Transcriber; and that what he speaks of them, in the Place quoted in his *Essay*, was but a transient Word. As to some others of the Ministers whom he names, he tells his Reader, He doubts not of their Attendance upon Judicatories in the Period mentioned. But I doubt very much of their Attendance upon Synods after 1610; and I think I have Ground to doubt of this, for the Reasons I have given in the above-quoted Place of the *Defence*. Mr. *Calderwood* is also amongst the honest Ministers, who, according to Mr. Currie, contended in a Way of Church-communion with the corrupt Party of the Ministry after 1610. But that he did not sit in Synods after 1610, I think, is plain from that Passage of his printed History, quoted, *Def.* p. 213. But Mr. Currie thinks fit, *Vind.* p. 212. to charge my Quotation with Partiality, because I have not given the full of that Conference that passed betwixt him and the Bishops. But, what is it that I have omitted? It is, says Mr. Currie, that, when the Bishop desired Mr. *Calderwood* to repair to Synods as well as Presbyteries, Mr. *Calderwood* answered, with respect to Synods, *He would advise upon repairing to Synods*. From this, says Mr. Currie, "Had *Calderwood* been so clear upon this Head at that Time, it may be thought he would never have taken the Affair to Consideration or Advisement; so it looks as if he had been in Suspence as to his Duty upon that Point." But I have much more Ground to charge Mr. Currie with Partiality in reporting the Story; he should have told, that it was at the Beginning of the Conference, that Mr. *Calderwood* expressed himself in the above Manner: And the true Matter of Fact is, as the same is reported, printed *History*, p. 687. That worthy Minister, Mr. *David Calderwood*, was banished the Country, and a Time was set for his Departure: He dealt with the Bishops to interpose with the King for a Propagation of the Time; the Bishops refused to interpose with the King for this Effect, unless he would condescend to three Things, which they demanded. One of them was, That he should repair to Synods. Upon this Demand Mr. *Calderwood* at first answered, *He would advise upon repairing to Synods*; whereby he plainly shewed that he inclined to

shift the Bishops. But the History adds, *When they urged him to repair to Synods*, then, after something spoke by the Bishop of *Glasgow*, the Bishop of *Caithness* said, "Come and say, *Hic sum*, and then do as you please." To which Mr. *Calderwood* answered, That *hic sum* is the Question; and then, as I observed in the *Defence*, he gives some weighty Reasons why he could not be present at Synods. From all which it appears evident, that Mr. *Currie* misrepresents the whole Story, when he lays it in such a Manner, as may make his Reader believe that Mr. *Calderwood* was in a Suspence as to his Duty upon this Point. Mr. *Currie*, *Vind.* p. 212. says, "Tho' he should yield it, that *Calderwood* would not go to Synods in that Period, he is only one Instance;" and, as the Saying is, *One Swallow makes no Summer.*" To which I reply, That unless Mr. *Currie* contradict the true Matter of Fact, as reported by Mr. *Calderwood* in his printed History, he must yield it to me, that this eminent Minister did, upon weighty Grounds and Reasons, refuse to sit in Synods during that Period. If, as Mr. *Currie* alledges, Mr. *Calderwood* is but one Instance, yet he is an Instance of one who understood Presbyterian Principles as well as any, then, or since that Time: Again, this one Instance is sufficient to disprove Mr. *Currie*'s general Assertion, That the honest Ministers in that Period, and Mr. *Calderwood* amongst the rest, continued to contend in the Judicatories, particularly in the Synods after the Year 1610. As for what Mr. *Currie* alledges from *Calderwood*'s Manuscript History, as I have not Access unto it, so I cannot form any Judgment upon it; but I make no Doubt, that, if I had Access unto the said large History, I should find that the printed History differs in no material Circumstance from the Manuscript, tho' the Manuscript may be more full in many Things than the printed History.

Mr. *Currie*, *Vind.* p. 223. reckons it a strong Presumption, if not a clear Proof, of honest Ministers attending upon Synods as well as Presbyteries, "That in all that Period from 1610 to 1638, he has not read of any one Person censured or reprov'd by Synod or High Commission for not attending upon Synods, for as strict as was the Law Ecclesiastick and Civil against all such as should not attend upon them." But, that Ministers were censured for not attending upon Synods, I can give as good Authority for as Mr. *Currie*'s own Testimony, *Vind.* p. 209. where he tells us from *Calderwood*'s Manuscript History, "The Bishops had so far prevailed, that the Authority that they had

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“ purchased, at that woful Assembly holden at *Glasgow*,
 “ was not controuled or called in question even by the whole
 “ Synods, some *few* excepted, who were confined before
 “ the Act of *Glasgow*, or were *since* confined, for not sub-
 “ jecting themselves to their Authority in the Diocesan Sy-
 “ nods.” Is it true that Ministers were confined after the
 1610 for not subjecting themselves to the Authority of Bi-
 shops in the Diocesan Synods? Then Mr. *Currie* has soon
 forgot what he read in *Calderwood's* Manuscript History,
 when he tells his Reader a few Pages after, That he has not
 read of any *one* Person censured or reproved by Synod or
 High Commission for not attending upon Synods. As for
 Mr. *Currie's* above Alledgance, That not *one* was censured
 for not attending upon Synods; I doubt not but Mr. *Currie*
 had read in *Calderwood's* History, p. 654. that the High Com-
 mission put in Execution Acts of Assemblies overruled by
 themselves; and likewise Mr. *Currie* has read, that the pre-
 tended Assembly at *Glasgow* enacted, “ That whatsoever
 “ Minister, without just Cause or lawful Excuse made, shall
 “ absent himself from the Visitation or the Diocesan As-
 “ sembly, he shall be suspended from his Office and Bene-
 “ fice; and, if he amend not, shall be deprived.” And
 this Act made many Ministers obnoxious to the High-Com-
 mission Court, before whom they were prosecute for Non-
 conformity. And, since it was not till the Year 1618 that
 the *Perth* Articles became the Trial of Ministers, it is to me
 evident and plain, that the Proceses for *Nonconformity* before
 the Commission Court, that did take Place before 1618,
 were chiefly because Ministers refused to submit to the Au-
 thority of Bishops in the *Diocesan* Synods, or, which is the
 same Thing, because they refused to sit in Synods.

As for what concerns the State of *Presbyteries* during this
 period, I shall refer the Reader to what I have observed
 from the *Apologetical Relation*, Def. p. 218, 219. as also to
 the Account that I give of the State of *Presbyteries* from
 Mr. *Wodrow's* History, p. 217. Mr. *Currie* reckons that
 Mr. *Wodrow* has laboured under a Mistake in the Account
 that he gives, *Vind.* p. 229. But Mr. *Wodrow* supports his
 Relation from some Remarks made by Mr. *Robert Douglas*.
 Likewise I observed, that the *Presbyteries* during this Pe-
 riod continued in an independent State upon any general
 Assembly, till the Lord turned back the Captivity of his
 people in the Year 1638. But Mr. *Currie* entirely omits
 this, when he pretends, *Vind.* p. 234. to report my Opinion
 with relation to the Conduct of *Presbyteries* in the same

Period. And if the State of Presbyteries is considered, particularly, as I have reported the same from the *Apologetical Relation*, Def. p. 219. the Reader may easily see, that Mr. Currie's Argument, from honest Ministers continuing to meet in their Presbyteries in that Period, does not conclude for our continuing in the Judicatories in this present Period.

There is yet another Thing advanced by Mr. Currie, to support his Argument, viz. That, during the Period before 1638, the witnessing Ministers did not then erect themselves into separate Judicatories from the then Assemblies or Synods, *Essay* p. 14. *Vind.* p. 220. Upon this Head I grant to Mr. Currie, that they did not so; but then I observe, Def. p. 223. that, "If they had followed this Course, they might have expected, according to the Violence and Tyranny of these Times, the same Treatment that Mr. Welsh and his Brethren met with for holding an Assembly at Aberdeen." I gave the Reader likewise the Judgment of a very considerable Minister of this Church, viz. Mr. James Melvill, concerning the Manner after which he thought the Lord's Witnesses in that Period should have testified, as the same is expressed in a Letter he sent from *England* to one of his confined Brethren in *Scotland*: It is set down at Length, *Calh. Hist.* p. 614. where he has the following Words; "Alas, if that Spirit of Action, Zeal and Courage, that sometimes did mightily reign in our Kirk, were kindled up again, that might make a few from every Presbytery and Province to convene together in the Name of Christ, and censure these Corrupters of the Kirk to the uttermost." In the above Words this eminent Minister does very plainly give his Judgment, not only for *Secession* from the corrupt Party at that Time, but also for meeting together in a distinct judicative Capacity from them, in order to exercise the Key of Discipline for censuring them. Mr. Currie makes some Exceptions to this Testimony, *Vind.* p. 210. where he says, "All that is said in that Letter will not prove that it was Mr. Melvill's stated Judgment, that honest Men ought to have made a *Secession* at that Time." But in the above Words Mr. Melvill gives his Judgment very plainly, that honest Ministers should have met in a distinct judicative Capacity from the corrupt Party. Mr. Currie adds "This Letter was writ 1609, and before 1610; which was the Year, according to Mr. Wilson, when honest Ministers began to withdraw from Synods." But, in whatever Year it was writ, it plainly contains Mr. Melvill's Judgment for the meeting of honest Ministers in a distinct judicative

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cative Capacity from such as were carrying on the Course of Defection, which is the Thing I plead for. Mr. Currie further adds, That the above Words " were only a pathetick " Wish to see such *Judas*es censured as had betrayed the " Church of Scotland." But the above Words of Mr. Melvill's Letter are a plain pathetick Wish, that honest Ministers might meet in a distinct judicative Capacity for the Effect mentioned; which still is the Thing I plead for. Mr. Currie subjoins, " Mr. Melvill in that Letter plainly condemns the Brethrens Conduct; for he wished there were " a few from every Presbytery, which few would amount to " upwards of 130, a few from every Presbytery being at " least Two from every Presbytery: *A few*, says he, *cannot do it*, and a competent Number of many is not to be " looked for." But I may also, in a very great Consistency with the Brethrens Conduct, and with what I have been pleading for, both in the *Defence* and in this *Continuation*, earnestly wish, that there were a few from every Presbytery to meet in a distinct judicative Capacity from the present Judicatories, who are carrying on a Course of Defection, in order to make a judicial Confession of the Truths of Christ; and to testify particularly and expressly against the Injuries that have been done our highest Lord, in his Person, Truths and Members: But alas! a few cannot censure effectually the Ringleaders in the present Course of Defection, and a competent Number of many is not to be looked for, till, as Mr. Melvill expresses himself in the same Letter, " the Lord himself arise and make his Musters. It is Time, " O Lord, arise; it is Time, O Lord, arise; it is Time: " For they have made thy Word and Law irrit, and of " none Avail; they have left *Jacob* in Servitude, and *Judas* " in Captivity."

As for that memorable Period of this Church betwixt 1638 and 1649, it is plain, that Mr. Currie in his *Essay* loads the Assembly 1638, and several of the Assemblies of that Period, with very unwarrantable and odious Proceedings: He complains, *Vind.* p. 23, 24, 25. that I do not notice what he declares, in the Preface to his *Essay*, to be his main End and Design in giving Instances of the Faults, Failings and bad Acts of Assemblies during the Period mentioned; such as, he gives the said Instances, that we may confess, grieve for and avoid them; as also, to shew that, if such or such Things were not Ground of Secession or Separation in the former Period of this Church, they cannot be such now. So Mr. Currie thinks fit to express himself,

Presf.

Prof. Essay, p. 5. I do not intend to take up the Reader's Time in searching into the Misrepresentations that he makes, and the Reflections that he is pleased to cast upon Acts of Assembly in the former Period of this Church: I shall only offer the few following Observations, which I think sufficient to take off the Force of his Argument, as it is laid against the present Secession, from his alledged Instances of Faults, Failings and bad Acts, in the Period of our Church betwixt 1638 and 1650.

1^{mo}, I grant, that the Church militant in her purest Times is never perfect, in her best Times there may be something still defective or wanting as to the Beauty and Order of the House of God, and there may be something culpable in the Administration; this is what the *Associate Presbytery* acknowledge with respect to the Period mentioned, *Act and Testimony*, p. 18. But yet,

2^{do}, This Church endeavoured, and mercifully attained, a considerable Pitch of Reformation during the foresaid Period; all her several Contendings and Wrestlings, all her solemn Vows and Engagements, her Declarations and Testimonies, pointed towards Reformation.

3^{tho}, It is quite otherwise in the present Period; This National Church, as represented in her present Judicatories, is so far from holding fast what we have attained in Reformation, or contending towards the same, that she is letting slip these Things that we have attained, and the Judicatories are justifying themselves in their several Defections and Backslidings; and therefore I reckon that the former Period of this Church was a Reforming Period, and that the present is a Period of Defection and Backsliding. Hence,

4^{tho}, I observe the following Difference betwixt the present and the former Periods of this Church, viz. In the Period from 1638 to 1650, the general and habitual Course and Tendency of the Proceedings of the Judicatories of this Church was towards Reformation; whereas the general Tendency of the Judicatories in the present Period is towards Backsliding and Deformation; And therefore, when the present and former Periods are compared, I humbly judge, that the *Associate Presbytery*, in emitting their *Judicial Act and Testimony*, did take what was the most proper Step in a Testimony of this Kind, viz. In mentioning the Defections and Backslidings of this Church, they begin where the Progress in Reformation-work began to stop, and when this Church began to make a retrograde Motion; they began at that Time, when the Sluice was opened to the vio-

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lent Current of Backsliding, which has run with an impetuous Torrent to this very Day, viz. in the Year 1650, when the *Publick Resolutions* were entred into, whereby the Enemies to our Covenanted Work of Reformation were brought into Places of Power and publick Trust. And tho' at the glorious *Revolution* 1688 great and wonderful Things were done by the Hand of Providence, yet we soon forgot the Lord's mighty Works; instead of endeavouring to recover the Steps of Reformation once attained unto, and instead of advancing and making Progress in Reformation-work, we are at this Day sunk in Degeneracy and Defection from the Lord. There is one Thing advanced by Mr. Currie, which seems to be laid against what I have now advanced, *Vind.* p. 24. where he says, "What Reformation was in the Period betwixt 1638 and 1650, was *mainly* done by the Assembly 1638." By which Words Mr. Currie seems plainly to tell his Reader, that no main Piece of Reformation was done in all that Period, except what was done by the Assembly 1638. Tho' that Assembly were instrumental in the Lord's Hand in doing great Things, yet I humbly judge there were *main* Pieces of Reformation begun and carried on after the said Assembly: As for Instance, Tho' our Doctrine was sound, as it is held forth in our first *Confession of Faith*, which was received and professed from the Beginning of our Reformation; yet, I think, it was a considerable Piece of Reformation, when our Doctrine was more fully and more clearly held forth, in Opposition not only unto the Errors of the Church of *Rome*, but also unto the *Arminian* and other Errors which had sprung up in the Church after the Reformation had begun; and this is done in our *Confession of Faith* compiled at *Westminster*, and received by the Church of *Scotland* Anno 1647. Likewise, these excellent Summaries of our Reformed Doctrine, by Way of Question and Answer in our *Larger* and *Shorter Catechisms*, excel any Thing of this Kind that was done either at or before 1638. Again, our Presbyterian Church-government is indeed held forth in our Second Book of *Discipline*; but yet the Form of Church-government laid down by the Assembly at *Westminster*, and received by the Church of *Scotland* Anno 1645, excels the Second Book of *Discipline*, especially in two Particulars; *First*, The Scripture-Proofs for the several Propositions in our Form of Church-government are distinctly laid down, which is not done in our Book of *Discipline*. And, *2dly*. The Scripture-warrant for the Meetings of the Ruling Officers of each particular Congregation, for the

Government and Discipline thereof, is also distinctly expressed in our Form of Church-government; but this is not done in our Book of Discipline. Likewise, tho' the Ordinances of Worship were pure from the first Beginning of our Reformation; yet we had no such *Directory* for Worship as that which was agreed upon by the Assembly at *Westminster*, and received by the Reforming Church of *Scotland* in the Year 1645. Also, I cannot but reckon the *Covenanted Uniformity* among the three Nations a further and main Step of Reformation. It was a Step of Reformation further than what was attained unto at the 1638, or before that Time. And therefore, as I cannot agree with Mr. *Currie* in his above-mentioned Assertion, viz. That what Reformation was in this Period of the Church, was *mainly* done by the Assembly at *Glasgow*; so likewise, for the above Reasons, I reckon the Period mentioned was a Reforming Period, and that several considerable Advances were made in the said Period towards Reformation.

I intend not to pursue Mr. *Currie* in the Reflections he casts upon some particular Acts of Assemblies in this Period of our Church, neither do I think it necessary; I hope all true *Presbyterians* will own the Period betwixt 1638 and 1650 to be a Reforming Period, yea, a Period wherein this Church in her Ecclesiastical Capacity made considerable Progress in Reformation, tho' at the same Time she met with considerable Opposition in carrying on Reformation-work: And therefore one of the Ends mentioned, as above, by Mr. *Currie*, why he tells the Faults or Failings of that Period of the Church, viz. "If such or such Things were not Ground of Secession or Separation then, they cannot be such now;" This, I say, is to no Purpose in the present Argument; in regard, whatever Faults, Failings or Defects she had in the foresaid Period, she must be considered as a Reforming Church at that Time: But, in the present Period, she cannot, even according to Mr. *Currie's* own Acknowledgment, be called a Reforming Church; for he tells his Reader that she is on the *Decline*, *Essay*, p. 59. Mr. *Currie* likewise tells his Reader, *Essay*, Pref. p. 4. that he owns "the Lord honoured his faithful Servants in that Period to do much for his Glory, for which, *he says*, he desires to give Praise." But Mr. *Currie* should have owned also, that the Lord honoured them, to make considerable Advances in Reformation, as in the several particular Instances I have given: But when Mr. *Currie* alledges bad Acts and Acts of Tyranny against the Assemblies of that Period, and that no *main* Piece of

Reformation was done after the Assembly 1638, it cannot but give Ground to suspect, that he does not esteem the Period betwixt 1638 and 1650 as a Reforming Period of this Church. But I shall leave Mr. Currie to the Treatment he gives this Period : If he thinks he has done Service thereby unto our Reformation-rights, when he mentions Faults, Failings, and bad Acts, and Acts of Tyranny, and slips over in deep Silence all the above Instances I have given of the Progress that they made in Reformation ; let him, as he speaks in another Case (*Vind.* p. 256. *viz.* upon some Answers I make to his Objections against our National Covenant) “ enjoy his Opinion : I shall not spend the Reader’s Time in “ *answering* what he says upon that Subject, which in my “ humble Opinion can never satisfy.” I shall only add, That I know some of his Brethren, who continue in Conjunction with the Judicatories, who are no less judicious than himself, are of Opinion, that he might have spoke with more Modesty of the Assembly 1638, and of some Acts of other Assemblies.

As for the historical Account that I give of that great and remarkable Appearance of God for this Church and Land in the Year 1638, *Def.* p. 228. to p. 258. Mr. Currie, *Vind.* p. 240. tells his Reader, He has no Controversy with me about it ; only he notices two Things, and I shall only notice one of these two Things, because I think it needful to clear a Fact with respect to our *National Covenant*. He observes, that I assert, *Def.* p. 238. “ It is a Mistake that many are “ under, when they affirm, that the several Acts of Parliament mentioned are a Part of the Oath of the Covenant.” Upon this says Mr. Currie, “ I wish he had given us some “ Authority for this ; for, of all that I have read upon the “ Subject, I have never seen any making the least *Innuendo* “ to that Purpose.” To which I reply, That, of all I have read upon the Subject, I have never seen any making the least *Innuendo*, that the Acts of Parliament mentioned in the Covenant are a Part of the Oath of the Covenant. I told, *Def.* p. 238. That, as the King’s Coronation-Oath was insert among the rest, it would be ridiculous to say, the Subjects swore the *Coronation-Oath*. I think this was one sufficient Ground for asserting, that the Acts of Parliament mentioned after the National Confession, were no Part of the Oath of the Covenant. Mr. Currie adds, “ It had not been “ improper for Mr. Wilson to have shown to what Part of “ the Covenant People are sworn, and what not ; or told, “ in what Place that Part of the Covenant, in which they

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"are concerned, begins, and doth end." To which I answer, The whole Land are bound, not to a Part of the National Covenant only, but to the Whole of it; and, if Mr. Currie wants to know what it is that is called the *National Covenant*, I answer, It is the same which is called the *Confession of Faith*, and which was subscribed at first by the King and his Household in the Year 1580, and thereafter by Persons of all Ranks in the Year 1581, by an Ordinance of Council and Acts of the General Assembly. Then in the Year 1638, when the general Meetings at *Edinburgh*, or *Tables*, as they were then called, resolved to renew the National Covenant, they subjoined to our National Confession several Acts of Parliament in favours of the Reformed Religion; these Acts of Parliament were insert at that Time by the said Meetings, to justify their Proceedings before the World, and to shew that they were not acting contrary to the laudable Laws of the Land, but that they had Law on their Side, when opposing the Liturgy and Book of Canons, and for their other Proceedings in Maintenance and Defence of our Reformed Doctrine, Government, Discipline and Worship, sworn to in our National Confession of Faith.

After the general Meetings had insert the Acts of Parliament mentioned, follows the *Bond* compiled by the said Meetings, and sworn in the 1638; by which *Bond*, the National Covenant is particularly accommodate and applied to their Circumstances at that present Time. I never doubted, that Mr. Currie at least would have known the Difference betwixt our National Confession or Covenant, and the *Bond* subjoined to it; but if he knows not where it begins, nor where it ends, he may easily know, that, after a short Preface, it begins with these Words, *We Noblemen, Barons, Gentlemen, Burghesses, Ministers, and Commons under-subscribing, &c.* and it ends with the following Words, *In witness whereof, we have subscribed with our Hands all the Premises.* After this is subjoined the Determination of the Assembly at *Glasgow* in the Particulars referred to them; and, by Act of the said Assembly, the Covenant is afterwards signed, according to the Determination of this Assembly in the said Particulars. And I reckon that the whole Land is concerned in the above-mentioned *Bond*, and in the Determination of the foresaid Assembly.

C H A P. V.

Containing some Instances of the Injustice done by Mr. Currie to the Judicial Act and Testimony of the Associate Presbytery.

MR. Currie both in his *Essay* and *Vindication* frequently accuses the *Associate Presbytery* of asserting, in their *Judicial Act and Testimony*, Things that are neither *Truth* nor *Matter of Fact*. I hope, I cannot be justly charged with entering into Mr. Currie's Conscience, when I affirm, that the Tendency of all his false Charges and Accusations against the *Act and Testimony* is, to represent the *Associate Presbytery* as *false Witnesses*; as also, to fright People from a Conjunction with them, in the Confession that they make of the Truths of our Lord Jesus Christ, in Opposition to the Injury that has been done them both in former and present Times. But, before I enter upon Particulars, I shall premise a few Things, for clearing a little the Import, End and Design of a Testimony of this Kind, now emitted by the *Associate Presbytery*.

1^{mo}, The Church of *Scotland*, in her Reforming Times, was a witnessing and confessing Church; the whole Body Ecclesiastick, both Office-bearers and People, did make a joint Confession of the Truths, both with respect to the Doctrine, Worship, Government and Discipline of the Lord's House, against *Papery*, *Prelacy*, *Erastianism* and *Sectarianism*, and whatever was contrary to sound Doctrine and the Power of Godliness.

2^{do}, The Confession that the Church of *Scotland* made of the Truths of God, was held forth from the Word of God, at first in her large Confession of Faith received *Anno 1560*, and in her short Confession of Faith, commonly called the National Covenant. Afterwards the Confession that this Church and Land made of the Truths of God, was held forth in our Confession of Faith compiled at *Westminster*, and in the Form of Church-government, the Directory for Worship and Ordination of Ministers, all received by the General Assemblies of this Church, in the Manner expressed in their several Acts adopting the same: And the Confession of this Church, with respect to the Doctrine, Worship, Government and Discipline, as the same are held forth in the above-mentioned Compositions, was particularly made, by

the Solemn League and Covenant of the three Nations, which was sworn by all Ranks of Persons in *Scotland*, not only *Anno* 1643, but also *Anno* 1649, after the Confession of Faith, Form of Church-government, and Directory for publick Worship, had been received by this Church.

3^{to}, The above Profession and Confession of the Truths of God was, in Reforming Times, the outward Bond of Union and Communion in this visible Church, both unto Church-members among themselves, and unto the Office-bearers of the Church in their several Ecclesiastical Capacities.

4^{to}, In the *Akt and Testimony* of the *Associate Presbytery*, our received Standards of Doctrine, Worship, Government and Discipline are particularly applied and laid against the Errors that have sprung up in this Church, and against such Corruptions and Defections as have taken Place therein, by which our subordinate Standards have been either obscured or perverted as to their genuine Sense and Meaning, and by which also palpable Deviations have been made from them. Hence, in the assertory Part of the *Akt and Testimony*, the Truths asserted are viewed as agreeable to the Word of God the supreme Standard, and also as agreeable to our subordinate Standards. Again, in the condemnatory Part of the *Akt and Testimony*, the Errors, Corruptions or Defections condemned, are viewed as contrary to the Word of God, and our subordinate Standards received and adopted by this Church in her Reforming Times: Therefore the *Akt and Testimony* of the *Associate Presbytery* is not a new Standard of Church-communion, far less is it to be equalled with our received Standards; but it is an Application and Declaration of their genuine Sense and Meaning, in Opposition to the Errors, Defections and Corruptions that have prevailed both in former and present Times.

5^{to}, The *Presbytery* require of all such as accede to them, or who come under their *Presbyterial* Inspection, that they signify their Approbation of their judicial *Akt and Testimony*; and the plain obvious Meaning of this is, that they signify or declare their Conjunction with the *Presbytery* in the same Confession that they make of the Truths of God, held forth from the Word of God in our received Standards of Doctrine, Worship, Discipline and Government: And, in this Respect, the *Presbytery*, and such as make Accession to them, do state themselves a *Confessing Body*; and the Confession that they make is of the Truths of God, in Opposition unto Deviations from the same; they make no other Confession

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but what has been made by this Church, in her Reforming and Covenanting Times; they make no other Confession but what this whole Church and Land are obliged by the Word and Oath of God to make, and which this National Church, as she goes under the Name of the Established Church, doth refuse to make. The Confession then that is made by the *Associate Presbytery*, and such as are in Conjunction with them, upon the Footing of the judicial *Act and Testimony*, is a Confession of the Truths of our Lord Jesus, against several Deviations and Defections from the same, either in Principle or Practice, which the Majority of this visible Church stand chargeable with.

I proceed now to the Charges and Accusations that Mr. Currie brings against the judicial *Act and Testimony*. The first I mention is, his alledging, The *Act and Testimony* contains Principles contrary to the Word of God and our solemn Covenant-engagements. This Charge and Accusation is laid by Way of Observe upon my following Expressions, *Def. p. 138*. "Tho' the Author of the *Essay* discovers his critical Talent with Abundance of Ill-humour against the Seceding Brethren, and tho' he has stretcht himself, as we shall afterwards see, in order to defame and discredit their *Act and Testimony*; yet he has not, neither can he charge them with any Principle adopted therein, but what has been received and confessed by this Church in her Reforming Times." Upon this, says Mr. Currie, *Vind. p. 143*. "But they are not so innocent here as he alleges; for they have espoused Principles which are contrary to the Word of God, to our solemn Covenant-engagements, and to our laudable Acts and Constitutions, as has been shown already, and may be further shown in this *Vindication*." Unto which I reply, That Mr. Currie has nowhere in his *Vindication* pretended to show, that any one Principle, or that any one Proposition in our *Act and Testimony*, is contrary to the Word of God, our solemn Covenants, or laudable Acts and Constitutions. I promised in the Entry of this *Continuation*, that I would not use his scurrillous Dialect of *Untruths, Fallboods, Slanders, and walking in Slanders*; but in regard the above Charge is not laid against myself in particular, but against the whole Presbytery, and against all such as have joined them in the Confession they make of our Reformed Principles, I may therefore be excused, if in this particular Instance I do not use that Lenity and Softness of Expression that I have hitherto used in this *Continuation*: And therefore I affirm, That
the

the above Charge and Accusation laid against the Presbytery's *Act and Testimony*, as containing Principles contrary to the Word of God, &c. is a bold Calumny; and I may justly crave that the World may hold him as a *false Accuser* and a *bold Calumniator*, unless he condescend upon the particular Expressions or Propositions in the Presbytery's *Act and Testimony*, which contain Principles contrary to the Word of God, our solemn Covenant-Engagements, &c. And I hope Mr. Currie may make this particular Condescension, without burdening the World with a Volume of Twenty four Sheets of Paper; and in this Case I shall be willing to attend him, if the Lord give Time and Health: And I hope the Reader cannot refuse that the Demand I make is both just and reasonable. In the mean Time I must observe, that the pretended Assembly 1739 have cleared the Seceding Ministers of this calumnious Charge, when in their *Act* against them they declare, That, if the Seceding Ministers would shew a Disposition to return to the Judicatories, that *Assembly* was ready to receive them with open Arms.

The *second* Accusation that Mr. Currie brings against the *Act and Testimony* is, That it contains several Things that are neither *Truth* nor *Matter of Fact*. He pretends to give several Instances to this Purpose through his *Essay*, and in his *Vindication*.

With respect to the above Charge I observe, That, in all the particular Instances that Mr. Currie alledges, he does not affirm that there is any Proposition or any Expressions in the *Testimony*, which contain Principles that are contrary to the Word of God or our received Standards; and I humbly judge this was the Thing he should have mainly done, and, until he do this, all his Exceptions against the *Act and Testimony* are of less Moment and Importance. As I have already observed, he discovers, in the Exceptions that he makes, his critical Talent with Abundance of Ill-humour against the Seceding Brethren, and he stretches himself in order to defame and discredit their *Act and Testimony*: And since Mr. Currie does not pretend to shew that any Principles are espoused in the *Testimony*, which are contrary to the Word of God and our received Standards, the unprejudiced Reader cannot but reckon his critical Exceptions against the *Act and Testimony* do not affect that Confession that is made of the Truths of God by the Associate Presbytery and such as declare their Conjunction with them, but that they are only a Wrangling about some Circumstances; and therefore I do not judge it worth my while to go through all his particular

particular Instances, till he make the Condescension that I have demanded and craved. I shall then only touch at some of the Particulars alledged, *Vind.* p. 330. to satisfy the Reader, that his Charge of *Untruths*, laid against the *Presbytery's* Testimony, is both unjust, and also an idle Wrangling about Circumstances, that do not affect the Confession that the *Presbytery* make in their *Act and Testimony*: And, in the particular Instances which I give, I shall observe the same Order in which Mr. *Currie* has laid them, in the 8th Chap. of his *Vindication*. Only the Reader may notice, that the first three Exceptions which Mr. *Currie* makes unto the *Testimony* are not contained in the *Act and Testimony*, but in the *Introduction* to it, which, as I have already observed, is no judicial Act and Deed, and consequently no Part of what is properly called the *Act and Testimony*: But since the *Introduction* contains nothing but what is *Truth* and *Matter of Fact*, and since it is the Deed of all the Brethren, tho' an extra-judicial Deed, I shall consider Mr. *Currie's* Instances in the Manner, as well as in the Order, in which he has laid them.

The first Exception Mr. *Currie* makes unto the *Act and Testimony* is as follows, viz. He alleges, It is not *Truth*, when the Brethren say, "Upon the Intimation of the Commission's Sentence, the Ministers therein-designed, gave in a Protestation, bearing a Secession from the Judicatories of this Church," *Introduction*, p. 3. But, why is not this Truth? Because, says Mr. *Currie*, "Their Secession at that Time was only from the prevailing Party in this established Church, without the least Word of making any Secession from a Judicatory." To which I answer, That I reckon these Terms, the prevailing Party, and the Majority of a Judicatory, Terms of the same Import and Signification; and therefore, when a Secession is made from the prevailing Party or Majority of a Judicatory, it is a Secession from the Judicatory itself; seeing the Majority of the Church-representative is still the Church-representative.

2dly, Mr. *Currie* alleges, It is not a true Representation, when it is told, *Introduction*, p. 3. "When the Brethren considered, that four Ministers, being thrust out all at once from Ministerial Communion with the present Judicatories, were a competent Number for associating together for the Exercise of Government and Discipline, &c." Mr. *Currie*, that he may shew that the above is not a true Representation, adds, "Had the Testimony said Three, instead of Four, it had been a juster Account; for, 'tis known, they were only Three in Number when they did

" did first constitute themselves into a Presbytery. Mr. *Wilson* hath owned to sundry, that he wanted Clearness to join the Associate Presbytery at their first Constitution." Unto all which I reply, I hope Mr. *Currie* will allow me to know better what pass among the Brethren at their first Constitution into a Presbytery, than he can know, from any Reports made unto him, or from any *Hearsay* Stories which he is very forward to publish; and therefore I do not think it amiss to give the Reader the following brief History of the Seceding Ministers Constitution at first into a Presbytery.

The Commission of the General Assembly, that met November 1733, passed a Sentence against the Protesting Ministers, whereby they cast them out from Communion with the present established Church. When this Sentence was intimate unto them, they gave in a *Protestation*, whereby they declared a *Secession* from the Judicatories, in the Manner that the same is expressed in their said *Protestation* before the *Commission* at the foresaid Time: And when this was done, immediately after they had gone out from the *Commission*, they agreed among themselves to meet the 5th of *December* following for Humiliation and Prayer, in order to ask Leading and Direction from the Lord, with respect to the Step that they should next take, after they had now declared a *Secession* from the Judicatories.

The Seceding Ministers met, according to their above Resolution, at the *Bridge of Garney* at the Time agreed upon; and the 5th Day of *December* was spent in Prayer, Humiliation and Conference together, concerning the present Providences of God towards them. They agreed to meet again the following Day for Prayer and Conference, when the following Question was proposed; Whether or not it was their Duty in their present Situation, when the present Judicatories had cast them out from Communion with them, and when they had, upon just and necessary Grounds, declared a *Secession* from them, to constitute themselves into a Presbytery? There was much and serious Reasoning upon both Sides of the Question; they endeavoured, in their Reasoning, to compare the Word of God and his Providences towards them together: And after Prayer, and Reasoning upon the same, the Question was put, *Constitute presently into a Presbytery, or not?* And the four Brethren did all with one Voice give it as their Judgment, that they should constitute presently into a Presbytery: And the Reverend Mr. *Ebenezer Erskine* was, by their unanimous Consent, desired to be their

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their Mouth to the Lord in this solemn Action; and he was enabled with much Enlargement of Soul to consecrate and dedicate them to the Lord, and to the Service of his Church, particularly of his broken and oppressed Heritage, in the present Situation into which by the holy and wise Providence of God they were brought; and, after Prayer, he was chosen Moderator of their *Presbytery*. I shall only make two Observes upon what passed at this Time: The one is, That the Presbyterial Association was not a rash and inconsiderate Deed at first; near two Days were spent in Prayer and serious Reasoning upon this Head, wherein, as I have observed already, the Seceding Ministers endeavoured to compare the Word and Providences of God together. Again, in their Meetings on the foresaid Days, particularly in their Presbyterial Constitution, I hope they felt and experienced something of the Lord's gracious Countenance and special Presence. Two Reverend Brethren, Masters *Ralph Erskine* and *Thomas Mair*, were Witnesses to all that passed the two Days mentioned; they were not then in Conjunction with the four Ministers in Secession from the Judicatories, but the Lord afterwards cleared their Way to join them.

After the Seceding Ministers had constitute Presbyterially, they unanimously agreed that they would not be sudden in proceeding to any Acts of Jurisdiction, but resolved, before any such Procedure, to wait if the Judicatories of the Church would return to our Reformation-standards; and therefore they held their Presbyterial Meetings, for some Time after their first Erection and Constitution, mainly for asking Counsel of the Lord, and for mutual Advice, and for Strengthening one another's Hands in the Work of the Lord; as is reported, *Introduction to the Testimony*, p. 3.

After the Meeting of Assembly 1735, when the Brethren observed the Conduct of the said Assembly, and that no Steps were taken towards Reformation, *Three* of the Seceding Ministers were then clear to proceed immediately to the Exercise of the Keys of Government and Discipline; but at that Time Mr. *Wilson* was not clear for taking this Step, but was of Opinion, that they should only hold their Meetings as they had done the former Year, namely, for mutual Advice in their present Situation, and for strengthening one another's Hands in the Work of the Lord: And indeed this was the only material Difference that was amongst that little Body, after their *Secession* from the Judicatories. But, by the good Hand of the Lord upon them, they were kept

unite among themselves; the other Three Brethren, who were clear for the above Procedure, did not proceed to any Step of Jurisdiction; and nothing of this Nature was done till after the Assembly 1736, when all the Four Brethren were convinced, that not only it was Duty, but also that it was *high Time*, for them to proceed to the Exercise of the Keys of Government and Discipline. The Reasons of their Procedure after the Assembly 1736 are hinted at in the foregoing *Introduction*, p. 7.

I am in no Concert with my Brethren in the above historical Account which I give, neither do any of them know what I write at the Time, and 'tis probable will not know 'till it comes abroad from the *Press*; but I judg'd it my Duty to give the above plain and impartial Account, not only to rectify Mr. *Currie's* above Mistakes, founded upon Hearsays or Stories reported to him, but also for the Information of others; in regard that, whatever the Effect of our present Presbyterial Association may be, or whatever may be the After-Conduct and Behaviour of any of the Brethren associate together; it may however appear, that our Presbyterial Constitution was entered into in a deliberate Manner, and with the Concurrence of all concerned.

3dly, Mr. *Currie* alledges, " 'Tis not Truth, when the Brethren say, *Independents* lodge the Keys of Government and Discipline in the whole Community of the Faithful; as *Introduction*, p. 4. *Act and Testimony*, p. 100." The Reason Mr. *Currie* gives, why he thinks this is not Truth, is, Because the Words of the Testimony bear, that this was the Opinion of them all, or the Generality of the *Independents*; and he says, 'Tis not Fact, that this is the received Principle of the Generality of *Independents*. To which I briefly answer; That the Brethren express themselves in the same Manner that the *London* Ministers do, in their *Preface* to that excellent Book, *Jus Div. Reg. Eccles.* where shewing the Difference between the *Presbyterian* and *Independent* Way, and the Excellency of the former above the latter, they say, " The *Independents* hold, that the Subject of Church-government is the *cetus fidelium*, or Community of the Faithful." And I do not think that I speak by way of Disparagement to Mr. *Currie*, when I affirm, that the *London* Ministers knew as well how to express the Principles of the *Independents* as Mr. *Currie* does, after all the Books he has read or turned over. I must add further, That when Mr. *Currie* alledges that the Brethrens Words bear, that the above was the Opinion of all the *Independents*

dents or the Generality of them, he does not quote the Brethrens Words fairly, for they bear no such Thing. Their Words, *Introduction*, p. 4. are, "They also judged it necessary for them to enter into a Presbyterian Association, not only for maintaining that Order among themselves which is required by the Word of God; — but also to distinguish themselves from *these* of the *Sectarian* and *Independent* Way, who lodge the Keys of Government and Discipline in the whole *Community of the Faithful*." Now, when the Brethren say, "to *distinguish* themselves from *these* of the *Sectarian* and *Independent* Way;" I humbly judge no reasonable Man will say that the Brethrens Words do bear, that all or the Generality of the Independents maintain the Principle above-mentioned.

4thly, 'Tis not Fact, says Mr. Currie, "When in their *Act and Testimony*, p. 18. they say, *The Church of Scotland in 1638 began where former Reformations had stopt.*" And why is not this Fact? Because, says Mr. Currie, "This is an Insinuation, as if formerly she had not been reformed from *Prelacy*." But, if Mr. Currie had not curtailed the Words of the *Act and Testimony*, his Reader would have easily seen that the Words import no such Thing as Mr. Currie alledges. The Words of the *Act and Testimony* are; "When, by a surprising and wonderful Appearance of Divine Providence, this Church was delivered from the Brink of Ruin in the Year 1638, the Judicatories of the Church pulled down and carried off the Rubbish of *Defection*; they began where former Reformation had stopt, and went forward in building and beautifying the House of God." What was that Rubbish of *Defection* that was pulled down and carried off? Was it not *Prelacy* and the five Articles of *Perth*? Was not the Reformation stopt by the Introduction of *Prelacy*? Did not the Assembly 1638 begin where former Reformation had stopt, when they condemned *Prelacy*, and declared that it was abjured by our National Covenant? Did not the Judicatories of this Church go forward in building and beautifying the House of the Lord, in the several particular Instances mentioned in the Close of the preceeding Chapter? But Mr. Currie must turn over every Stone, to force a Lie upon the *Judicial Act and Testimony*.

5thly, Mr. Currie says, It is not Truth which is asserted, *Act and Testimony*, p. 34. viz. "That the principal Articles of Mr. *Renwick's* Indictment, and for which he suffered, were his affirming, That the Duke of York, then King

" *James VII.* was not rightful and lawful King of these
 " Realms; and that *because he was a Papist, had never sworn*
 " *the Coronation-Oath, and was overthrowing the fundamental*
 " *Laws of the Kingdom*; also his affirming and defending
 " the Lawfulness of defensive Arms, both for our Civil and
 " Religious Liberties." Upon this *Wodrow's History* is
 quoted, Vol. 2. p. 632, 633. I have narrated the Words of
 the *Act and Testimony* full; Mr. Currie curtails them, where-
 by his Reader cannot so well understand them. But, what
 Untruth is in the above Words? Says Mr. Currie, " In
 " Mr. Renwick's Indictment there are no such Words as
 " these recorded by Mr. Wodrow, I mean, as the above
 " Words printed in *Italic*." To which I reply, Tho' I
 have followed Mr. Currie in printing the above Words in
Italic, yet they are not all printed in *Italic* in the Pres-
 bytery's *Act and Testimony*, neither are they laid in such a
 Way and Manner as if they were the express Words of the
 Indictment: Any who considers the above Words, will
 easily see, that the Presbytery intends them only as an Illu-
 stration of the first Article mentioned, for which that wor-
 thy Minister was indicted. And here I might justly return
 to Mr. Currie one of his own proverbial Sayings, *He wants*
but a Hair to make a Teather.

6thly, Mr. Currie asserts, that " It is not Truth nor Mat-
 " ter of Fact, for any to assert, It is one of the Principles
 " espoused by this Church, That, because one is a *Papist*,
 " he cannot be rightful and lawful King of these Realms;
 " as is alledged, *Act and Test.* p. 34." But Mr. Currie has
 not told the Words of the *Testimony* in which the above-al-
 ledged Untruth is expressed, and therefore I must report
 them; they immediately follow the Words above-narrated
 concerning Mr. Renwick's Indictment, and they are, " These
 " Principles were espoused by this Church ever since our
 " Reformation from *Popery*, and were justified by all the
 " three Nations at the Revolution." And, what are the
 Principles which the Presbytery affirm have been espoused
 by this Church ever since our Reformation? They are the
 Principles mentioned in the preceeding Head, viz. Mr. Ren-
 wick's affirming the Lawfulness of *defensive Arms* in the
 Manner expressed above; as also his affirming, That the
Duke of York was not lawful or rightful King of these Re-
 alms, because he was a *Papist*, and because he had never
 sworn the Coronation-Oath, and was overthrowing the fun-
 damental Laws of the Kingdom. And, if Mr. Currie calls
 in question the Truth of what is asserted, he is the first of
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the Presbyterian Denomination, so far as I know, that has alledged the above Principles were not espoused by the Church of Scotland ever since our Reformation. But Mr. Currie, that he may fix an Untruth upon the *Testimony*, adds, " If a Papist hath been set upon the Throne by the People, " they having sworn Allegiance to him, he ruling according " to Law, and defending the Subjects in their Rights and " Privileges Sacred and Civil, he may be a lawful and " rightful King; according to the Doctrine taught in our " *Confession*, Chap. 23. Art. 4." Tho' I humbly judge, the Words of the Presbytery's Act do not determine in the Question as stated above by Mr. Currie, yet he appears to me to pervert the Words of our *Confession*; the Words of the *Confession* are, " Infidelity, or Difference in Religion, doth " not make void the Magistrate's *just and legal Authority*." But according to our Principles received immediately after the Reformation, when Queen Mary abdicate the Crown, as also according to the Principles which were espoused by the three Nations at the Revolution, One that is a professed Papist can never have a *just and legal Authority*; and consequently it is nowise contrary to our *Confession of Faith* to assert, That a *professed Papist cannot be lawful nor rightful King of these Realms*, even tho' all Mr. Currie's *If's* should be taken in; and I know not but some of our moderate *Jacobites* would desire the *Papish Pretender* only upon such Conditions as are above-mentioned by Mr. Currie. I have not the least Suspicion that Mr. Currie is of *Jacobite* Principles; but I pray and hope, that the Lord shall preserve these Lands from having a Papist upon the Throne, even tho' he should swear the Coronation-Oath. I do not think any, that know the Principles of *Papists*, can reckon their Liberties Sacred or Civil to be safe under the Government of a *Papist*: And therefore, if Mr. Currie had pleased, he might have spared his above *If's* and *Conditions* anent a *Papist* his being set upon the Throne; I know not what good Purpose or End he intends to promote by them.

7thly, According to Mr. Currie, 'tis neither Truth nor Matter of Fact, when it is asserted, *Act and Test.* p. 39. " That our Parliament, immediately after the Revolution, " did appoint the Oath of Allegiance to be sworn, in place " of any other Oaths imposed by Laws and Acts of pre- " ceeding Parliaments." But 'tis Truth and Matter of Fact, that the Oath of *Allegiance* at first, and the Oath of *Abjuration* afterwards, are both substitute in the Place and Room of our solemn Covenants, which in our Reforming Times were

were reckoned a proper Test of Allegiance to the Sovereign; and this I judge is all that is intended by the Words of the Presbytery in their *Act and Testimony*. I shall leave the Reader to what I have said upon this, *Def.* p. 319. which, if he pleases, he may compare with Mr. Currie's Reply, *Vind.* p. 315.

8thly, Says Mr. Currie, 'Tis not Fact, when it is asserted, *Act and Test.* p. 40. "That it was the laudable Practice in Reforming Times to condemn all Steps of Defection." To prove that this is not Fact, Mr. Currie mentions some Things that were not condemned by the Assembly 1638, and, amongst others, the Supremacy. To which I answer, That the Acts of that Assembly against Prelacy and the five Articles of *Perth*, and against the Civil Places and Power of Kirkmen, were a Condemning of former Steps of Defection; as also the Act against the High-Commission Court, and the Act concerning yearly General Assemblies, were Acts that condemned the Supremacy.

9thly, Says Mr. Currie, It is not Matter of Fact, when in the same Page 40. it is affirmed, "That, in former Reforming Times, it was their laudable Practice to censure such as were guilty of publick Backsliding." This the Presbytery prove by the Acts that were past, censuring all the Bishops, in the Year 1638, who were the *Ringleaders* in the Apostasy. The Presbytery never assert that every Individual who was involved in the Guilt of Defection and Backsliding was censured, but restrict their Assertion unto the Prelates who were Ringleaders in the Apostasy; and if Mr. Currie pleases to look to the *Latin* History, intituled, *Historia Motuum*, he'll get several Instances of Censures inflicted upon others who were active in carrying on the Course of Defection.

10thly, Mr. Currie says, "It is not Truth to say, That the Assembly 1638 deposed all the Bishops; for that Assembly only suspended Two of them." To which I reply, That the Presbytery in their *Act and Testimony* speak according to the Title prefixed to the several Acts past against the Bishops; and I refer the Reader to what I have further observed upon this Head, *Def.* p. 320.

11thly, Mr. Currie further alledges, That it is not Fact which is said, *Act and Test.* p. 40. "That, in the Reforming Period, they returned to the Lord by a particular Acknowledgment and Confession of the Sins of the Ministry and of the whole Land." And, why is not this Fact? For, says Mr. Currie, in all that Period we have no particular

" ticular Acknowledgment of the Sins of the Ministry, in
 " complying with Prelacy, &c." To prove the Truth of
 what is asserted by the Presbytery, I refer the Reader to
 the historical Account which I give in the *Defence* of what
 past in the Year 1638; particularly, to the Assembly's Let-
 ter 1640, directed to the Churches of *Helvetia*, a Part of
 which is insert, *Def.* p. 237. and to the other Instances I
 give of deep Humiliation and Mourning upon the Renova-
 tion of the National Covenant, *Def.* p. 241, 242. as also to
 the Speech delivered by the Moderator of the Assembly
 1638, narrated, *Def.* p. 255, 256. I shall not pursue Mr.
Currie further in his Exceptions against the *Act and Testi-
 mony*, till he make the above particular Condescension which
 I have craved and demanded. It is like Mr. *Currie* may tell
 his Reader in his next Book, That his Exceptions against
 the *Act and Testimony*, which I have not touched, are *un-
 answerable*; and that they are, as he speaks, *puzzling*. But
 they appear to me as trifling, and as easily answered, as
 these I have above condescended upon: And I doubt not
 that such who are truly concerned with the State of Matters
 in the Church of *Scotland* at this Time, and who are willing
 to join the *Associate Presbytery* in the Confession that they
 make of our received Principles, in Opposition to the mani-
 fest Injuries that have been done them, and the Deviations
 that have been made from them; I doubt not, I say, that
 such will be in no Strait and Difficulty about declaring their
 Conjunction with the *Associate Presbytery* upon the Footing
 of their *Judicial Act and Testimony*, notwithstanding of the
 Exceptions that Mr. *Currie* makes unto it, providing they
 consider the same with Judgment, and without Prejudice
 and Biass. I shall close this Chapter with an Observe which
 Mr. *Currie* makes, *Vind.* p. 85. " I know not, for my Part,
 " who can express themselves with so much Caution, but
 " sometimes these who are fond to animadvert upon the
 " Words of others, and are critical, may find a Handle to
 " grip at."

CHAP.

C H A P. VI.

Wherein some lax Principles are instanced, which are advanced by Mr. Currie, either in his Essay or Vindication.

I Have alledged sometimes in the *Defence*, that Mr. Currie has vented, in his *Essay*, some Principles concerning Church-communion, which I judge to be lax. Mr. Currie thinks fit in his *Vindication* to return the Charge, with an Accusation of several *Anti-reformation Principles*, which he alledges are asserted in the *Defence*. I shall briefly consider the *Anti-reformation Principles* he charges me with; and then I shall give some particular Instances to shew, that I have still Ground to accuse him of Laxness in Principle upon the Subject of *Church-communion*.

The *first* *Anti-reformation Principle* charged, is laid in the following Terms, *Vind.* p. 4. "It is an *Anti-reformation Principle*, to assert, with our Brethren, That People ought to separate from any Church like the Church of Scotland." But, as this is a begging the whole of what is in Question betwixt Mr. Currie and the *Associate Presbytery*, so I reckon I have equal Ground to charge him with the following *Anti-reformation Principle*, viz. That it is warrantable for us, yea, that we are obliged in Duty, to continue in Ecclesiastical Communion with a Church, when, in her Ecclesiastical Capacity, she departs from Reformation once attained unto, and justifies herself in her Defections and Backslidings, persecuting and casting out of her Communion such as endeavour to testify and bear Witness against her Defections and Backslidings, and when she is, in these and the like particular Instances, breaking asunder the external Bonds and Ligaments of Ecclesiastical Union and Communion amongst all her Members. This I take to be a Principle that runs through the Whole of Mr. Currie's *Essay* and *Vindication*; and it appears to me to be an *Anti-reformation Principle*, that is, a Principle everfive of that Principle upon which our Secession from Rome was stated, and a Principle directly opposite to the Characters of a *true Church*, as they are laid down in our Reformed Confessions of Faith.

A *second* *Anti-reformation Principle*, he charges me and all the Seceding Brethren with, is, *Vind.* p. 32. where he says, "The Author of the *Defence*, and all the Brethren, again

" and

" and again harp upon this, That the Church of Scotland hath kept in Ministerial Communion with them, one who had *derogate from the essential Glory of the Son of God.*" He adds, " That, if he is not far mistaken, the Brethren would be very hard put to it, to find a Scripture for founding a Sentence of Excommunication against Professor *Simson*, considering what Repentance he professed before the Assembly." And then he subjoins, " Here the Reverend Mr. *Wilson*, in his pretended *Defence* of our Reformation-principles, defends another *Anti-reformation Principle.*" Which, says he, appears from the *First* and *Second* Book of Discipline, where the *Obstinate* are only to be excommunicate. Mr. *Currie* also gives the Judgment of this Church in her Directory for *Church-government* and *Church-censures*, as also the Judgment of some godly and able Ministers, such as Masters *Gillespie*, *Burroughs*, &c. who all declare, the Impenitent and Obstinate are only to be excommunicated. But, according to Mr. *Currie*, Mr. *Simson* was a Penitent; and therefore Mr. *Wilson* and the rest of the Brethren are guilty of an Anti-reformation Principle, when they have affirmed, that such a Penitent, as Mr. *Simson* was, should have been excommunicate. To which I briefly answer, That the Reverend Principal *Haddow*, in his Preface to his *Enquiry*, p. 9. which I have quoted already in this *Continuation*, exculpates Mr. *Wilson* and all the Brethren of the Charge that Mr. *Currie* has laid against them, when he asserts, That Mr. *Simson* understands his several Declarations made before the Assembly in a Sense consistent with his former Papers, and does not ingenuously retract his Arian Tenets therein vented. And here we have another lax or Anti-reformation Principle maintained by the Reverend Mr. *Currie* in his pretended *Vindication* of the real Reformation-principles of the Church of Scotland, viz. That the present Judicatories did right, in holding one in Ministerial and Christian Communion with them, who had *derogate from the essential Glory of the Son of God*, and who had never made an ingenuous Retraction of the *Arian* Tenets which he had vented in several Papers, during the Dependence of the Process against him.

Mr. *Currie* charges several erroneous Principles upon me, on the Question between him and me, Whether or not Intruders should be received and acknowledged by the Church as her lawful and sent Ministers? *Vind.* Chap. 5. Sect. 3. But I have considered and answered his Accusations upon this Head, Chap. 3. Sect. 3. of this *Continuation*, to which I refer the Reader. I shall only in this Chapter give a few

Instances of some of Mr. Currie's Principles, which appear to me to be *lax Principles*; and the most of them are such, upon which he supports his Argument for Conjunction with the present Judicatories, and against Secession from them.

Some of Mr. Currie's lax Principles are contained in his Answers that he makes to an Argument for Secession from the present Judicatories, as it is stated by Mr. *Ebenezer Erskine* in his *Preface* to Mr. *Guthrie's* last Sermon, p. 7. The Words are, "When the Reformation of Corruptions, and the Purging out of evident Scandals, is the only Condition demanded, what can be the Reason that it is not granted?" "One of the two it must needs be, *viz.* Either because the Judicatories will not, or else because they cannot reform, If it be because they will not, they are to be withdrawn from as wicked: If it be because they cannot, or want Power, it says, the Key of Discipline is taken from them, and that they are not Christ's Officers and Stewards." Mr. Currie alledges, That I argue much to the same Purpose, when, *Def. Pref.* p. 7. I say, "What Reason can be given, why the present Judicatories refuse to discharge their Duty, in lifting up a judicial Testimony for Truth, or why they refuse to set about Reformation-work? There must be one of two, I cannot conceive a Midst betwixt them; either they *will not*, or they are *bindred* to discharge their Duty by some outward Force and Violence upon them. I hope the last cannot be alledged; — therefore no other Reason can be given for the Conduct of the Judicatories, but that they are *obstinate* in their Course and Way, and will not reform." Mr. Currie alledges, *Vind.* p. 349. That, if he is not far mistaken, the Horns of the above Dilemma are so broken, that it can neither pierce, draw Blood of, nor do the least Hurt unto, his *Essay on Separation*." Let us then enquire how Mr. Currie has broken the Horns of the Dilemma. He alledges, *Vind.* p. 14. That it contains "corrupt Doctrine, and an Error of a dangerous Nature." But, how does Mr. Currie instruct this? "For," says he, Reformation may be refused by Judicatories when they are neither *weak* nor *wicked*, but perhaps *blind* or *ignorant*, or cannot see the Evil of what is complained of." But if a Church is *blind* or *ignorant*, then I affirm she is both *weak* and *wicked*, unless Mr. Currie can alledge that sufficient Means of Instruction are not given her; and, if he says so, he reflects upon the holy Scriptures, as if they were not a sufficient and clear Light for directing the Judicatories of a Church at all Times, and in all Cases, to their Duty. Be-

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sides, the above Doctrine taught by Mr. Currie is both corrupt and dangerous, in regard he doth upon the Matter affirm, that a Church which refuseth Reformation is not to be departed from, if her Obstinacy proceeds from her *Blindness* or *Ignorance*; and this I look upon to be a lax Principle. And truly, at this Rate, the Church of *Rome* is not to be departed from; because it may be alledged, that *perhaps* she is *blind* or *ignorant*, and cannot see the Evil of what is complained of.

Mr. Currie has yet a *second* Engine, whereby he endeavours to break the Horns of the above *Dilemma*, *Vind.* p. 15. says he, "Granting a Church is obstinate, and will not reform some Things; this, in the Opinion of sound Divines, is not enough to prove she is to be forsaken and deserted, if we be not required to approve of any Thing amiss in her." Mr. Currie gives this as his own Opinion, *Essay*, p. 16. and p. 113. as also, *Vind.* p. 60. where he says, "I own, that, tho' an Error should creep into the Standards of a Church, and an Error of some greater Importance, if I be not required to approve of it, I could not think it Duty to separate from her." If Mr. Currie's Words have any Significancy at all, they bear, that tho' a Church goes on obstinately in a Course of Defection from the Lord, and will not reform some Things, yea, tho' a Church should maintain Errors of Importance in her Standards, that is, tho' she should confess and avow them; yet we ought not to depart from Ecclesiastical Communion with her, unless she requires of us to approve of her Defections and Backslidings. The above Principle appears to me to be a very lax one, because, according to the said Principle, a profane *Syncretism* or *Coalition* with Adversaries of Truth is established, which all our Reformed Divines do justly condemn. As also, by the same Principle, Church-communion is stated upon negative Terms; whereas, as I observe, *Def.* p. 47. "Something positive is required to warrantable Church-communion; particularly, a publick Profession and Confession of the Truths of God, is one of the *peculiar Characteristicks* of the Church of the living God: The Church, unto which we may warrantably join ourselves, ought to maintain and profess the true Doctrine and the true Faith; according to a Quotation from Mr. Gillespie, *Essay*, p. 3." And, if a Church does not maintain by visible Profession the true Doctrine and the true Faith, she is no more a true Church of the living God; and consequently, if a Church goes on obstinately in a Course of Defection, and will not be reform'd,

if she maintains in her Ecclesiastical Capacity important Errors, it is sinful, unsafe and dangerous to continue in Ecclesiastical Communion with her.

Mr. Currie has yet a *third* Engine for breaking the Horns of the fore said Dilemma ; but, in my humble Opinion, it is as weak and insignificant as any of the two former. He says, *Vind.* p. 17. " In answer to Mr. Wilson, I may tell him, 'The Reason, why Judicatories do not lift up a judicial Testimony, may be, because they do not see it present Duty, or this may flow from some prudential Considerations; tho' positive Duties bind *semper*, yet not *ad semper*.'" To which I answer, I know no prudential Considerations that should hinder the Church from testifying against the Dishonours done to the Lord Jesus, and the Injuries done to his Truths and Members. As for what are called prudential Considerations, these have been and are like to prove the Ruin of this Church, and a wicked and sinful Device, whereby the Redeemer has been robbed of his declarative Glory, whereby his Crown has been profaned and cast down to the Ground, and whereby the present Judicatories have lulled themselves asleep in their grievous Sin of refusing a proper Testimony for Christ and his Truths. As for the above *Latin* Phrases which Mr. Currie makes use of, they may amuse some of his Readers, but they are a mere Blind and Fallacy. The Meaning of them is, That positive Duties bind always, but not at *all Times*. But, when is the Time when the Keys of Government and Discipline should be exercised in testifying for Christ ? Is it not when Corruptions and Defections prevail in a Church ? For my Part, I know nothing that should hinder the Office-bearers of the Church, or that can warrantably hinder them, from discharging their Duty, if, as I have observed, their Meetings for this End are not hindred by outward Force and Violence. Mr. Currie's above Reasoning puts me in Mind of the old Plea, *Hag.* 1. 2. *The Time is not come, the Time that the Lord's House should be built.*

A *third* lax Principle, wherewith I charge Mr. Currie, is laid down, *Essay*, p. 17. where he says, " Albeit there be Errors and Errors of a hainous Nature among some in a Church, this is not sufficient Ground of Separation from that Church, nay, not tho' these Errors should remain uncensured." I observed, *Def.* p. 51. That this Proposition, as Mr. Currie has laid it, appears to me to be very lax and dangerous; and that because it is one of the special Ends and Designs of God's erecting and rearing up for himself a visible Church in the World, that he may be honoured and

and glorified by a publick and open Confession and Acknowledgment of the Truth: Therefore, if any particular visible Church shall tolerate in her Bowels Errors of a hainous Nature, and if she refuses in her Ecclesiastical Capacity to testify against them, she does not answer the End and Design of infinite Wisdom, Love and Grace in her Erection and Constitution; if Errors of a hainous Nature pass uncensured, and if the Judicatories of the Church go on obstinately in this Course, the House of the living God becomes thereby a *Den of Thieves and Robbers*, and the Church may be a Society made up of gross Hereticks. Tho' I reason to this Purpose in the *Defence*, yet Mr. Currie makes no Answer to my Reasonings; and yet he pretends to follow me Foot for Foot, as I have already frequently observed.

A fourth lax Principle is contained in the *Essay*, p. 63. where he proposes the following Argument against Secession from the Judicatories, viz. "That to separate from the Church of *Scotland* at this Day, is interpretatively a Condemning of Christ the Head of the Church, as if he was to be blamed, seeing he yet keeps Communion with her." Mr. Currie states his Argument thus, *Vind.* p. 79. "When we separate from a Church with which Christ keeps Communion, we interpretatively condemn him for keeping Communion with them, with whom we cannot have Communion." Mr. Currie never once enters into my Reasons why I condemn his above Proposition, as they are laid, *Def.* p. 70. particularly, when I observe, "That the Sovereignty of Grace may be glorified amongst these, whom it is not safe or warrantable for us to hold Communion with, as Members of the same Ecclesiastick Body." As also, "That the hidden and secret Communications of the Grace of the Redeemer are neither the Standard nor Rule of our Duty." Mr. Currie owns that Secession from the Church of *England* is warrantable, because she imposes sinful Terms of Communion: But, does Mr. Currie think, that Secession from that Church is a blaming the Head of the Church, if he communicate his saving Grace to such in that Church, whom yet we cannot hold Church-communion with? Mr. Currie's above Assertion appears to me to issue in this Principle, That we ought to hold Communion with every Church, how corrupt soever, unless we can suppose she is such an one as Christ does not communicate his Grace unto any of her Members; otherwise, according to Mr. Currie, we interpretatively blame Christ for holding Communion with such, with whom we cannot hold Communion.

But

But the Laxness and Tendency of such a Principle as this, I leave to the Judgment of such as are unprejudiced, and who have not given up themselves unto the greatest Lengths of the *Latitudinarian Scheme*. Mr. Currie pretends, That several eminent Divines support his Argument: But his Manner of writing puts me in Mind of Professor *Simson's* Conduct, who always pretended the Authority of some considerable orthodox Divine for his peculiar Doctrines: But, no doubt, Mr. Currie knows an ordinary Observation, viz. That, before *Pelagius* appeared in the World, the primitive Fathers used some more unguarded Expressions; and I doubt not but that eminent Divines have been more unguarded in some Expressions about Church-communion, before the *Latitudinarian Scheme* did prevail in the Manner it does in the present Age.

A fifth lax Principle vented by Mr. Currie is, That *Omissions are not a just Ground of Separation from a Church*. Essay, p. 122. and Vind. p. 102. This I reckon a lax Principle, for the Reasons I have given, Def. p. 98. which Mr. Currie never pretends to answer.

Sixthly, There is yet another Principle advanced by Mr. Currie, which I have Ground to quarrel: It is contained in an Exception that he makes unto the *Fifteenth Article* of our first Confession of Faith; tho' he does not think our Reformers had an unsound Sense under his quarrelled Expression, yet he reckons it contrary to the Doctrine delivered in the 16th Chapter of our *Westminster Confession*; he calls it an Expression *unsound in itself*, and says, he could not subscribe it, Vind. p. 60, 61. He says, It seems to favour the *Baxterian Scheme*, and is *unsound in itself*, Vind. p. 98. Reader, here is a Confession of Faith that has passed through all the Reformed Churches, it has been translated into *Latin*, it has been joined with the other Reformed Confessions in the *Syntagma Confessionum*, it has never (so far as I know) been stigmatized with Unsoundness by any Reformed Divine, till Mr. Currie, who professes to be a Member of the established Church of *Scotland*, brings the Accusation of Unsoundness against it. Our famous and learned Countryman, Mr. *John Welsh*, defends the Doctrine contained in the foresaid Article of our Confession of Faith, in his excellent Treatise, intituled, *Papery anatomized*, Sect. 7. and he has not discovered any Thing unsound or erroneous in the above Article of our Confession. The Expressions that Mr. Currie charges with Unsoundness are these, *Article 15. 1st Confess. God the Father, beholding us in the Body of his Son Christ Jesus,* accep-

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accepteth our imperfect Obedience, as it were perfect. The Title of this Article of our Confession is, *Of the Perfection of the Law, and the Imperfection of Man*; Where two Points of Truth are asserted, in Opposition to the corrupt Doctrine of the *Papists*. The first Point of Truth asserted in the foresaid Article is, That the holy Law of God is *most perfect*, in Opposition to the *Popish* Doctrine concerning the *Imperfection* of the Law of God: The other Point of Truth asserted in the same Article is, "That our Nature is so corrupt, so weak, and so imperfect, that we are never able to fulfil the Works of the Law in Perfection." This Truth is also laid in direct Opposition to the Doctrine of the *Papists*, who teach, That even in this Life we may yield perfect Obedience to the Law of God; yea, that one may do more than is commanded: And upon this erroneous Doctrine they build their no less corrupt Doctrine concerning Works of *Supererogation*. The *Papists* object, That, if our Works are not perfect, they can never be accepted in the Sight of God. Unto which our Confession of Faith answers, with all other Reformed Divines, "God the Father, beholding us in the Body of his Son Christ Jesus, accepteth our imperfect Obedience, as it were perfect; and covers our Works, which are defiled with many Spots, with the Justice of his Son." Where is now the Unsoundness that is in this Doctrine? Says Mr. Currie, "The Judgment of God being always according to Truth, the above Doctrine is unsound, and he could not subscribe it." But, is there any Thing asserted in the above Words of our Confession of Faith, concerning the *Judgment* of God, but what is Truth? No, nothing at all. Our Confession does not say, that God judges our *imperfect* Obedience to be perfect: This is evident, when it is expressly asserted, that such Works as are accepted are *defiled with many Spots*. What is it then that is asserted in our Confession? It is, That our imperfect Obedience is accepted, as it were perfect. The plain, obvious Sense and Meaning of the Words is, That our imperfect Obedience is fully, really and truly accepted in the Sight of God, as if it were an Obedience without any Spot or Flaw. And if it is enquired, Whence it comes to pass, that this our imperfect Obedience is accepted? our Confession of Faith answers, *God beholdeth us in the Body of his Son*: This is an emphatick Expression, and a Phrase peculiar to that Spirit that breathed in Reforming Times: Our received Doctrine is expressed in the above Words, namely, That all who believe, are unite to Christ, they are one mystically with

with him; and therefore their Works that spring from Faith, tho' in themselves they are defiled with many Spots, are all covered with the Righteousness of his Son. And this Doctrine is the same with that which is taught in our *Westminster* Confession of Faith, *Chap. 16. Art. 5, 6.* Our best Works, "as they are wrought by us, they are defiled and "mixed with so much Weakness and Imperfection, that "they cannot endure the Severity of God's Judgment; yet "notwithstanding, the Persons of Believers being accepted "thro' Christ, their good Works also are accepted IN "him." I would willingly know from Mr. Currie what Branch of the *Baxterian* Scheme the Expressions in our first Confession of Faith either favour, or seem to favour. If it is Mr. Currie's stated Judgment, that the imperfect Obedience of Believers is not accepted *in the Body of his Son* Jesus Christ, *as it were* perfect; he either leaves the *Popish* Objection in its full Force against our Protestant Doctrine on this Head, or he *seems* to favour the *Popish* Doctrine concerning the Merit of good Works. But tho' Mr. Currie has rashly accused our Confession of Faith of Unsoundness, yet I charitably judge that he is orthodox and sound upon the Head mentioned; only it is probable he has, without Consideration, licked up this Objection against our Confession of Faith, from *some* who have of late racked their Inventions to find out Quarrels with our *National Covenant*, wherein our first Confession is expressly recognized.

A *seventh* lax Principle concerning Church-communion is contained in the Answer which he gives to the following Question proposed, *Def. p. 302.* "Whether or not a particular visible Church, who have embraced one Confession of Faith, one Directory for Worship, one Form of Church-government, may require it of all her Members, "in order to full Communion in all sealing Ordinances, that "they confess, acknowledge, and swear to abide in the Profession and Obedience of, the same Doctrine, Worship, "Government and Discipline?" And then I propose five several Questions for clearing and confirming what is intended by the foresaid Question. But Mr. Currie, without pretending to answer any of these, gives the following Answer to the Question as above proposed, *Vind. p. 287.* "I think "a Church may require of her Members, in order to full "Communion, as admitting of People to the Table of our "Lord, that they confess, acknowledge and declare their "Resolution, in the Strength of Divine Grace, to abide "in the Profession of the true Doctrine, Worship, Dis-

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" discipline and Government of Christ's House, contained in
 " the Lord's Word. And I think, *says he*, the Doctrine,
 " Worship, &c. of this established Church is agreeable
 " thereto, and founded thereon. Yet, *adds he*, For a
 " World I durst not excommunicate such as evidence them-
 " selves to be Members of Christ's Body, nor keep them
 " back from the Communion of his Body and Blood, as
 " could not approve of every Thing in our Constitution."
 Then he gives an Instance of some in other Churches whom
 he durst not debar from the Lord's Table; and alledges,
 that what he has expressed just now is the *least Principle* that
 ever I could charge him with.

I must beg leave to make the following Observes upon
 Mr. Currie's above Answer; *imo*, When Mr. Currie states
 Christian Communion upon a Profession of the true Doctrine,
 &c. contained in the Lord's Word, I humbly judge Com-
 munion is stated in a too general Manner: The holy Scrip-
 tures are indeed perfect, and the primary Rule and Standard
 of all Church-communion; but yet, such as maintain and
 profess gross and dangerous Errors, will agree to these gene-
 ral Terms, *viz.* to *profess* the true Doctrine contained in the
 Lord's Word. It is well known, that the grossest Hereticks
 pervert and wrest the Scriptures to their own Destruction.
 Likewise, when he states Communion in the general Terms
 above-mentioned, the Necessity and Warrantableness of
Confessions of Faith in particular visible Churches, whereby
 the Truth is held forth from the Word of God, in Oppo-
 sition to the cunning Sleight of Adversaries, is by this Means
 subverted, or rejected, as a narrowing the Terms of Chri-
 stian Communion. When Mr. Currie states *Christian* Com-
 munion in the general Manner above-mentioned, he may
 with equal Reason give up himself to the Practice of our
New-fashioned Ministers, who never mention our Confession
 of Faith or Catechisms in Baptism, but who take Parents
 engaged in general Terms, to educate their Children in the
 Principles of the Christian Religion contained in the Word
 of God. As also, by the above Manner of stating Chri-
 stian Communion, a wide Door is opened to a profane
 Mixture in the Church, particularly in the Partaking of
 sealing Ordinances; in regard such who own and profess
 scandalous Errors, whereby the true Doctrine is corrupted,
 and whereby the Order and Government of the House of
 God is subverted, will all agree to profess, that they believe
 the Truth of what is contained in the Word of God;
 and for the Reasons mentioned I humbly judge, that, as

Mr. Currie states Communion in the above general Manner, he vents and maintains another very lax Principle.

2do, Mr. Currie perverts the true State of the Question, when he says, He durst not debar such from the Lord's Table, who evidence themselves to be Members of Christ's Body, &c. The Question is, Whether or not such as openly and avowedly reject and oppose, whether in Principle or Practice, such Steps of Reformation as have been received, avouched, confessed and sworn unto, by a particular visible Church; whether or not, I say, such are so far guilty of Scandal in that particular visible Body, as that they may and ought to be debarred from the Lord's Table? And, for illustrating this, I notice the following Things; 1st, That Matters of Scandal are not to be confined to gross Violations of the second Table of the Moral Law: I humbly judge, that avowed and gross Violations of the first Table of the Law are no less scandalous, and that they are equally dangerous to the Church, as the more gross Violations of the second Table of the Moral Law. 2dly, I further notice, our Presbyterian Divines justly argue against the *Erasians*, that if Ceremonial Uncleanness debarred Church-members under the Old Testament from eating the *Passover*, then there is equal Reason for it, that Moral Uncleanness in Church-members, under the New Testament, should exclude them from eating our Gospel-passover, *Numb. 5. 2, 3. Every one that was a Leper, every one that had an Issue, and whosoever was defiled by the Dead, is commanded to be put out of the Camp.* And, *Numb. 9. 6, 10.* certain Men, who were defiled by the dead Body of a Man, were, by the Commandment of the Lord, debarred from eating the *Passover* in the appointed Season. It cannot be refused, that there might be some such, who might be under the Ceremonial Uncleanness mentioned, who yet were *Israelites indeed*, and evidenced themselves to be Members of Christ's Body: And, for the same Reason, I humbly judge, that there may be some Church-members under such Moral Uncleanness, as may justly keep them back from the Lord's Table; and that even some such may evidence themselves to be of that Number who shall sit eternally at the *King's Table* above, and yet they must be debarred from the Table below, till the Scandal and Offence that they have given be removed according to the Rules of the Gospel. And tho' I own, that the greatest Tenderness should be used by the Office-bearers of the Church, towards all such as evidence themselves to be Members of Christ's Body; yet I cannot go in to Mr.

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Currie's general Assertion, without some Limitation and Restriction, to wit, *That such as evidence themselves to be Members of Christ's Body, are not to be kept from the Communion of his Body and Blood*; because even some such may be guilty of such Scandals as may justly debar them from the Lord's Table, and I know not but they may die under the Scandal, and yet notwithstanding shall sit eternally at the *King's Table* above.

3tho, I observe, That there is a Difference betwixt the Case of such as are Members of this particular visible Church, and the Circumstances of others who may be Members of other particular visible Churches: As for Instance, The Testimony for the Worship, Discipline and Government of the Lord's House has been more clearly and more solemnly stated, likewise it has been more particularly avouched and confessed, in this Church, than in some other Churches; And therefore I humbly judge, that a Departing from the Worship, Government and Discipline of the Lord's House, is a more hainous and more scandalous Sin in *Scotland* than in some other Churches.

I shall only observe in the *last* Place, That some Years ago it was an ordinary Practice among some of our Ministers, who are (as *Mr. Currie* speaks, *Vind.* p. 14.) amongst the tenderest and most zealous in the Ministry; I say, It was an ordinary Practice among them, when administering the Sacrament of the Supper, to debar from the Table of the Lord, such as *opposed*, or were *Enemies* to, a Covenanted Work of Reformation. In these or the like Terms they expressed themselves. I cannot say whether this was *Mr. Currie's* Practice or not; for I was never Witness to his Dispensing that holy Ordinance in his own Church except once, and I do not remember if he expressed himself any way upon this Head: But it is well known over all the Country, that some who were looked upon, and commended as the *strictest* Ministers, expressed themselves in the Manner I have mentioned. *Mr. Currie's* Reasonings appear to me to be levelled against such a Practice; and if *Mr. Currie*, or these who he says were reckoned the strictest Ministers, depart from their former Practice, it will be to me a lamentable Evidence, that *Latitudinarian* Principles are prevailing in the once famous Reforming and Covenanting Church of *Scotland*.

I shall only name another Principle advanced by *Mr. Currie*, which appears to me to be lax: It is expressed in the following Terms, *Vind.* p. 339. "If Church-judicatories have

" any Power above or beyond only that which is *consultative*,
 " it must at least be this, that their Sentences are to be
 " submitted unto, *tho' we cannot see the Equity of them.*" I
 refer the Reader to what I have observed upon this Head,
 Chap. 3. Sect. 2. of this *Continuation*. I shall only add,
 That as the above Principle establishes the Doctrine of im-
 plicite Obedience to the Judicatories of a Church, so it ap-
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 versy betwixt the *Popish* and *Protestant* Churches.

I have now given several Instances of Mr. Currie's lax
 Principles upon the Head of Church-communion: Tho' I
 had Freedom to do it, yet it would be in vain to own the
 present Judicatories so far, as to crave that they might
 censure Mr. Currie for his lax Principles; especially when I
 consider, that they have passed many dangerous Errors, that
 have been brought to their Bar, without a due Testimony
 against them. I shall only add, That when I consider how
 Mr. Currie extenuates the publick Sins and Defections of
 this established Church to such a Measure and Degree, that
 he alledges the Seceding Brethren have not given any suf-
 ficient Evidences of positive Backslidings in the Judicatories,
 except some *violent Intrusions*, Vind. p. 32. and likewise,
 when he reckons the Charge of Defections and Backslidings
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 also, when I consider the above lax Principles that he has
 vented upon Church-communion; I may justly conclude,
 that he deserves the Church's Censure, rather than the Sup-
 port of her publick Funds in his Writings, which 'tis judged
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 to the Judgment of some who are not *Seceders*, the employ-
 ing of them this Way is a gross Misapplication of them.

C H A P. VII.

*Concerning the Agreement of the Associate
 Presbytery, both in Principle and Pra-
 ctice, with Mr. James Guthrie and the
 Protesters in the former Period.*

THE Occasion of the present Question is: Mr. Currie,
 in the *Appendix* to his *Vindication*, asserts, " That
 " Mr. Guthrie, and the other *Protesters* in his Day,
 " were as opposite in Principle and Practice to such Pres-
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"byterians as do separate from the Church of Scotland at present, as are *Nadir* and *Zenith*, or *Light* and *Darkness*." *Vind.* p. 345. I shall leave Mr. *Currie* to the Terms of Art that he thinks fit to make use of; whether they are fitly applied or not, is not worth While to enquire into. Only I think, that, in Writings of this Kind, such Terms of Art, if they have a Shew of Learning and Reading, that is all, they have nothing more.

As for the Principles of the *Associate Presbytery*, they are fully and plainly laid down in the assertory Part of the *Act and Testimony*, and they are the same with these which were maintained and professed by Mr. *James Guthrie* and the other *Protesters* in his Day. As to the Manner of testifying for these Principles, the *Associate Presbytery* do testify in the same Way and Manner that the eminent Minister Mr. *James Guthrie*, and the other *Protesters* in his Day, did testify; as may appear from the following particular Instances.

1^{mo}, The *Protesters* in the former Period disowned the Authority and Constitution of the Assemblies that met *Anno* 1651 and 1652: Even so the *Associate Presbytery* have, upon just and weighty Grounds, disowned the Authority and Constitution of the present Judicatories, by their Act dated at *Edinburgh*, May 1739.

2^{do}, Mr. *Guthrie*, and the other *Protesters* in his Day, continued to exercise their Ministry, after some of them were deposed by the pretended Judicatories at that Time. That some of them were deposed, Mr. *Currie* owns, *Vind.* p. 160. And I suppose it will not be controverted by any who know the History of our Church, that these deposed Ministers continued to exercise their Ministry in as free and full a Manner as formerly: Even so the Ministers of the *Associate Presbytery*, tho' the most Part of them have been prosecuted unto Deposition by the pretended Assemblies at this Day, do continue to exercise their Ministry, notwithstanding of the pretended Sentence passed against them.

3^{tio}, Mr. *Guthrie*, and the *Protesters* in his Day, met together in distinct Judicatories, and exercised the Keys of Government and Discipline in a distinct judicative Capacity from these who were called the *Publick Resolutioners*: Even so the Seceding Ministers exercise the Key of Government and Discipline in a distinct Capacity from the present Judicatories. This is what Mr. *Currie* refuses; and he affirms, That Mr. *Guthrie*, and the other *Protesters* in his Day, still contended in a Way of Church-communion, without Separation;

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ration; and that they judged it their Duty to live in Church-communion, and to join in Church-judicatories, without associating themselves into Presbyteries, Synods or Assemblies distinct from the then backsliding Judicatories. This is a common Topick, that runs through Mr. Currie's Writings against the present Secession from the Judicatories; as, *Vind.* p. 15, 347, 356, &c. And, to satisfy the Reader that Mr. Currie's Account of the Behaviour of the *Protesters* is a Mistake, I shall give a few particular Instances of their meeting in a distinct judicative Capacity from the *Resolutioners*.

When the Controversy began in this Church, concerning the admitting of Malignants into Places of publick Trust; in the Presbytery of *Linlithgow*, there was no Meeting of Presbytery from the Year 1650 till the Year 1651. The first Meeting of Presbytery that was, was a Meeting of Seven of the Protesters who met at *Ecclesmachan*; and the *Resolutioners*, being One or Two supernumerary, met at *Bathgate*. The *Resolutioners* appointed a Conference with the *Protesters*; but, when they declined the Conference, the *Resolutioners* caused summon them by their Officer in order to Censure: But, when the Summons was not regarded, the Matter was referred to the Synod, who at their first Meeting delayed it to the ensuing Synod, and appointed the *Protesters* and *Resolutioners* to be summoned to compear before them at *Linlithgow*, May 1652. But, none of the *Protesters* compearing, the *Resolutioners* compeared, and were holden by the Synod to be the Presbytery of *Linlithgow*; and so they continued in two Presbyteries till the Restoration. There were three Parishes during that Time settled, every one of them both by the *Protesting* and *Resolution* Side, viz. *Linlithgow*, *Bathgate* and *Carridden*. Mr. William Weir was settled Minister at *Linlithgow* by the *Protesting* Presbytery: He returned to *Linlithgow*, and died Minister there, after the Revolution. Mr. William Crichton, who was Minister of *Edinburgh* after the Revolution, and who was Moderator of the second General Assembly thereafter, was ordained by the *Protesting* Presbytery Minister at *Bathgate*. Who was ordained Minister at *Carridden* I am not informed, neither am I informed who were the three Ministers who were ordained by the *Resolution* Presbytery. In the Parish of *Bathgate* they had two different Places of Worship: Likewise in the Church of *Linlithgow* they had two different Places of Worship; they had also two different Sessions there. The Records of both Sessions are lying, as I am informed, in the Hands of the present Clerk. The Registers of the two different

ferent Presbyteries are yet extant. The *Protesters* Register is in the Hands of a Reverend Minister of that Presbytery, and the Register of the *Publick Resolutioners* is in the Hands of the present Clerk of Presbytery; and, as I am informed, this Register bears plainly, that the Protesters had constitute themselves into a Presbytery, and called themselves by the Name of the Presbytery of *Linlithgow*. Likewise, in the Presbytery of *Stirling*, the *Protesters* and the *Publick Resolutioners* met in distinct Presbyteries; the Protesters met in Presbytery at *Stirling*, and such as were Publick Resolutioners met at *Aloa*. Also, in the Presbytery of *Auchterardice*, the *Protesters* met in a distinct Presbytery from the *Resolutioners*. The Register of the Synod of *Perth* and *Stirling* for that Period clears the Fact which I have mentioned. But, not to insist upon such particular Instances, the *Publick Resolutioners* bear Testimony to the Truth of the Fact which I assert against Mr. *Currie*, in their Paper intituled, *The Protestation given in to the General Assembly, July 21st 1652.* p. 6. where they say, "They (*viz.* the *Protesters*) meeting then in *Edinburgh* without Order, after a little Pause, did constitute themselves in an Ecclesiastical Judicatory, wherein magisterially they define Things so prejudicial to us, as not only perfectly obstructed all Peace, but also sounded the Alarm to a new Conflict, by emitting a Paper, wherein they peremptorily conclude, among the chief Causes of the Lord's Controversy with the Land, the *Publick Resolutions*, and the preceeding Assembly, to have a special Place." The Paper mentioned is writ on the *Resolution* Side, and therefore the above Expressions are in a Stile reflecting upon the *Protesters*. But however, we may gather from them the following plain Facts; 1^{mo}, That the *Protesters* did meet at *Edinburgh*, and did constitute themselves into an Ecclesiastical Judicatory distinct from those of the *Publick Resolutioners*. 2^{do}, That the *Protesters* did exercise the Keys of Government and Discipline in a distinct judicative Capacity: And this they did three Ways; 1st, They condemned the preceeding Assembly. 2^{dly}, They condemned the *Publick Resolutions*; which two they judicially condemn, as having a special Place in the chief Causes of God's Controversy with the Land. 3^{dly}, They emit a Paper containing their above Conclusions; and this is the same upon the Matter with the Proceedings of the *Associate Presbytery*, in emitting their *Act and Testimony*. And, from the Instances that I have given, I humbly think it appears, that Mr. *Currie* is much mistaken, when he affirms as above,

That

That Mr. *Guthrie* and the other *Protesters* judged it their Duty to join in Church-judicatories, without associating themselves into Presbyteries distinct from the *Resolutioners*. As also, I think it appears, that the Practice of the Seceding Ministers is not quite unprecedented, when they have associated themselves into a Presbyterial Meeting, and have emitted an *Act, Declaration and Testimony* for Scotland's Covenanted Reformation.

I have done with what I intend at this Time upon Mr. *Currie's Vindication*. If I had taken notice of every Thing that deserved Censure in his Book, I might soon have doubled his large *Vindication*; but, tho' I have written only about the Half of what Mr. *Currie's Vindication* contains, yet I am afraid I may be justly blamed for writing so much upon a Book, in which the Case of the Seceding Ministers is with so much Ill-nature misrepresented, and where the Question is still mis-stated, as also, where the Argument is always shifted. When the Reverend Mr. *Currie* says, That his Design is not to add Oil to the Flame, *Vind.* p. 1. I can also safely say, That my Design in writing is not to fret any, and far less is it to kindle or cherish a consuming Fire or Flame of Division. I sincerely wish that I could get my own Soul roused up, and others excited, unto a due Concern for the declarative Glory of our Redeemer, which is so much veiled by the present Judicatories, and all Sorts of Persons in our Land; as also, that both I myself and others were awakned to a humbling Sense of the Dishonours and Indignities that have been done to our Lord Jesus, and the Truth as it is in him; and likewise, that the Dross of Defection and Backsliding may be consumed, and that Glory may dwell in our Land. I can in some Measure of Singleness and Simplicity say, that these are the Ends which I desire to pursue in writing upon this Subject, tho' I am very sensible that in all my Writings, and particularly upon this Subject, I very much fail and come short in following these Ends.

Mr. *Currie*, in the Page above-quoted, observes, That controversial Writings may thro' the Divine Blessing issue in Peace, when managed and read with that Spirit of Love and Meekness that becomes the Gospel. But I am far mistaken if Mr. *Currie's* Writings have any Tendency towards a true and desirable Peace: And however strong Mr. *Currie's* Disposition was to take the Field at first upon this Controversy; yet I am likewise very much mistaken if he had not done more for true Peace, if he had followed the Advice of some of his judicious Brethren, and shut up his Papers in his Closet,

set, without ever troubling the World with them. However, I hope, that, after the Question about Secession from the present Judicatories has been so much tossed, our *gracious God, of whom are all Things*, will bring Glory to his own great Name, Honour to his Truth, and Edification to the Body of Christ, out of the present Debate. I join with Mr. Currie, when in the same Page he says, "It is to be lamented, our Time should be spent in such Debates and Controversies, which might be improved to better Purpose." But in the mean Time, when Truth is opposed from the Press, and since the Cause, which I hope is the Lord's, is misrepresented, and run down, in such a confident and boasting Manner as is done by Mr. Currie, and under such Countenance and Support as is given him by the Judicatories; I judge it my Duty to cast in my Mite for the Vindication of this Cause against such *Gainsayers*. I desire to pray with my whole Soul, that the Reverend Mr. Currie may be graciously reclaimed from his lax Principles concerning Church-communion; and that he may see his Sin in extenuating our publick Defections and Backslidings, after the Manner I have frequently observed he has done; and that both he, and all and every one of us, and all Sorts of Persons in the Land, may receive the Promise of the *Spirit of Grace and Supplication, that we may look upon him whom we have pierced, and may mourn*; and that we may all return to the Lord, from whom the Judicatories, and all Ranks of Persons in the Land, have deeply revolted.



POSTSCRIPT.

WHEN the most Part of the Sheets of this *Continuation* were cast off the Press, a printed Letter came to Hand, directed for me, from the Reverend Mr. John Lawson Minister of the Gospel at Closeburn. He complains, in some Lines prefixed to his printed Letter, that he had writ me several Times upon the very important Subject of our Secession, but had received no Answer. If the Reverend Mr. Lawson has writ me several Times upon the Subject mentioned, his Letters have not come to my Hand: It is more as two Years since I

received any Letter from him before this came to me, which he has now published, and which is dated *December 16th 1740*, and I did not receive it till the last Week of *January* thereafter. I was credibly informed about the latter End of *March*, that a Copy of it was in *Glasgow*, in order to be printed; and therefore I thought it proper to supersede any Answer unto it, until I should see it from the Press; especially when it was not above Six Weeks in my Hand, when Mr. *Lawson* had declared his Intention of publishing it; and now he hath published it, with an Appendix and Postscript: The Appendix is also directed for me, tho' I never saw it till it came from the Press. He gives the following Reason for publishing his *Letter*, viz. "That, receiving no Answer, he thought himself obliged to publish his *Letter*, for the Information and Warning of all the Separatists from this Church, &c." But I humbly judge, he might have saved his Labour, in regard he hath not advanced any Thing new, and hath writ nothing but what Mr. *Currie* hath said before in his *Essay* and *Vindication*: Only the Reverend Mr. *Lawson* sometimes exceeds Mr. *Currie* in Warmth of Expression, and writes with less Guard and Caution.

Mr. *Lawson*, in his Warning that he gives unto Separatists, proceeds upon some of these lax Principles which, as I have observed, Mr. *Currie* adopts in his *Essay* and *Vindication*: As for Instance, he asserts, *Letter*, p. 3. "That no Member should separate from a Church that has been a true Church of Christ, until they cannot remain any longer in it without Sin, or are in Hazard of being involved in Sin, either by being obliged to approve of something that is bad, or condemn something that is good, &c." This is a Principle that runs through Mr. *Lawson's Letter*, and I have observed it is a lax Principle, *Def.* p. 55. where I give my Reasons against it; as also, Chap. 6. of this *Continuation*. I shall only add, That, according to Mr. *Lawson's* above Principle, if a Church has been a true Church of Christ, tho' she should degenerate so far, as not to have any just Claim to the Characters of a true Church, yet, if she does not require of us an express Approbation of her Steps of Defection, we ought to continue in Ecclesiastical Communion with her; consequently, tho' her Steps of Defection be never so gross, we are to own and acknowledge ourselves Members of the same Ecclesiastical Body. At this Rate, Ecclesiastical Communion ought to be maintained with the most corrupt and degenerate Churches, upon the Condition mentioned: But this is quite contrary to the Principles of the Reformed Churches

concerning Church-communion, as their Principles are laid down from the Word of God, where they give the Characters of true Churches, or such Churches with whom we may warrantably join ourselves in Ecclesiastical Communion.

I must further observe upon this Head, That, as his above Principle is laid, it seems it is his Opinion, that the only Way of being involved in Sin, while we continue in Communion with a corrupt Church, is, by a formal and express Approbation of her Sins and Defections; whereas there are many other Ways by which we may be involved in Sin, by our continued Conjunction with a backsliding Church: As for Instance, if our Conjunction with a backsliding Church doth strengthen the Hands of the backsliding Body, or if it hinders us from the Discharge of any positive Duties, which our Station, Office or Character does oblige us unto; in these or other Instances that might be mentioned, our continued Union and Conjunction with a corrupt Church, not only brings us in Hazard of Sin, but actually involves us in Sin, even tho' there be no express Approbation of their Sin.

Another Principle advanced by Mr. *Lawson* is, "That no Member should separate from a Church that has been a true Church of Christ, unless some one or other sinful Term of Communion is imposed upon them." With respect to the present Judicatories of this National Church, I have shown, *Def. Chap. 2. Sect. 4.* that, by some Acts and Deeds of the present Judicatories, sinful and unwarrantable Terms of Communion are imposed upon the Members of this Church; as also, that a Conjunction with the Judicatories of this Church, doth in its own Nature involve Ministers in the Omission of such Duties as their Office and Station doth oblige them to, *Def. p. 132, 133.* I further illustrate and confirm the same, *Chap. 3. Sect. 5.* of this *Continuation*. But with respect to Mr. *Lawson's* above Principle, That we are not to separate from a Church unless there be some sinful Term of Communion imposed, it is laid down, *Letter p. 3.* and also runs through his whole *Letter*; I look upon it to be a lax Principle, and I have given my Reasons for this, *Def. p. 47, 48, 49.* to which I refer. Since Mr. *Lawson* hath thought fit to adopt the above Principle, I shall only put him in Mind, that he states Church-communion upon negative Terms, whereas something positive is required unto warrantable Church-communion, and our Reformed Divines have always stated Church-communion upon positive Terms; and Mr. *Lawson's* contrary Principle lies open to

the Absurdities I mention in the Place of the *Defence* directed unto.

Mr. *Lawson* follows Mr. *Currie*, in pleading that we ought not to separate from a *True Church*, where there is no sinful Term of Communion imposed; as *Letter*, p. 15, 16. But neither he nor Mr. *Currie* have ever given the Reader the determinate Sense and Meaning of the Terms, *True Church*. Mr. *Lawson* in his *Letter*, p. 16. says, "You do what you can in your *Defence* to prove that the Church of Scotland is not a true Church of Christ." But I endeavour, *Def.* p. 41, 42. to explain the Terms, *True Church*; and I own, if *True Church* is taken in a large Sense, then many Churches, that are most corrupt and degenerate, may be called *True Churches*: As for Instance, the Church of *England* in the large Sense of the Terms, is a *True Church*. But if the Terms, *True Church*, are taken strictly, for such Churches as have the Characters of True Churches, laid down in our Reformed Confessions of Faith; then I refuse that this National Church, as she is represented in her present Judicatories, is a true Church of Christ. Mr. *Lawson* subjoins to his Words above-quoted, "But I am of Opinion you exceedingly misrepresent the Matter." But he should have told wherein I have misrepresented the Matter. He tells me, It is his Opinion that I have done so; and, frequently through his *Letter* and *Appendix*, he tells his Reader, he thinks so and so, or such is his Opinion; as if he judged his Opinions or Thoughts were sufficient to convince me or others; But if he had answered the End which he says he proposes to himself in publishing his *Letter*, viz. the Information and Warning of all the Separatists, and of all the Professors of our holy Religion; he should have given some particular Instances, wherein I exceedingly misrepresent the Matter. He alledges, Mr. *Currie* has proven in his *Vindication*, that the Church of Scotland is a true Church, and that there is not the least Ground of Separation from her. Since he refers me to Mr. *Currie* for Proof of the Charge that he lays against me, of exceedingly misrepresenting the Matter, I have equal Reason, in Answer to his Charge, to refer Mr. *Lawson* to what I have said in the *Defence*, and in this *Continuation*.

Mr. *Lawson* asserts, "That tho' the Plurality of Church-ministers and People, and the great Plurality also, should be going on in a Course of Defection, yet there may not be the least Ground of Separation from her, in case there be no sinful Terms of Communion imposed," This, he thinks,

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thinks, is undeniably plain from the Case and Circumstance of the Church of the *Jews* in many Periods, and also from the Case of the Christian Churches of *Corinth*, *Galatia*, &c. *Letter*, p. 6. *App.* p. 27. And here Mr. *Lawson* argues in the same Way that Mr. *Currie* does before him: The Prophets under the Old Testament, Christ and his Apostles under the New Testament, continued to join in Communion with the Church of the *Jews*, notwithstanding of manifold Corruptions and Defections; therefore it is unwarrantable to make Secession from very degenerate and corrupt Churches, if there be no sinful Terms of Communion imposed. This, I suppose, is the Argument in its full Force and Strength, as it is laid by Mr. *Currie* and Mr. *Lawson* against our present Secession. But I observe, *Def.* p. 281. That the Argument is stated after the same Manner by the *Papists* against the Secession of the *Protestant* Churches from them: And indeed the Argument, as it is laid above, comes out with equal Force against the Secession of the *Protestant* Churches from *Rome*. As for Instance, Do we depart from Ecclesiastical Communion with *Rome*, because she is corrupt and unsound in Doctrine? The *Papists* can tell us, The Generality of the *Jewish* Doctors and Teachers were most degenerate and corrupt in their Doctrine; *They made the Commandment of God of none Effect by their Traditions; they taught for Doctrines the Commandments of Men*, *Mat.* 15. 6, 9. Do the *Protestant* Churches alledge that they depart from Communion with *Rome*, because she is tyrannical in Government? The *Papists* can tell us, *Jerusalem killed the Prophets, and stoned them that were sent unto her*. If the *Protestants* shall yet further alledge, The Church of *Rome* imposes sinful and unwarrantable Terms of Communion; the *Papists* may reply, The *Jewish* Sanhedrim did impose the most sinful and wicked Term of Communion, when they enacted, *That, if any Man did confess Christ, he should be put out of the Synagogue*, i. e. excommunicated, *John* 9. 22. And I humbly judge, that neither Mr. *Currie* nor Mr. *Lawson* can answer the Reasonings of the *Papists*, according to the above Way and Manner in which Mr. *Lawson* has laid the Argument; and therefore, in order to answer effectually the above Subterfuges of the *Papists*, the peculiar State of the *Jewish* Church is to be considered, and the different State of the New-testament Church from that of the *Jewish*: This is what our Reformed Divines do, and this is what I have endeavoured to do, *Def.* p. 180, 181. and Chap. 3. Sect. 5. of this *Continuation*. And if Mr. *Lawson* will grant that

that we ought not to maintain Communion with a Church where sinful Terms of Communion are imposed (and this is what he does own, and must own, if he is consistent with himself in his *Letter*) I can prove at the same Time, according as he lays the Argument from the Church of the *Jews*, that we ought to maintain Ecclesiastical Communion with a Church, even when sinful and unwarrantable Terms of Communion are imposed. And, if Mr. *Lawson* would write for the real Information of these whom he calls *Separatists*, I wish that in his next he would give some distinct and satisfying Answer to the above Difficulty, yea, gross Absurdity, with which his Argument is pressed. With respect to the Churches mentioned under the New Testament, where Errors and Corruptions had crept in; unless Mr. *Lawson* can prove that a Course of Defection was carried on by these several Churches in their Ecclesiastical Capacity, and that they justified themselves in the same, and refused to reform, after Admonitions, Warnings and Reproofs given them; unless, I say, Mr. *Lawson* undertake to prove this, he speaks neither against the Question nor Argument as I have stated them.

Mr. *Lawson*, *Letter*, p. 19. regrets it as a Thing lamentable, that some well-meaning People know nothing to Purpose of the Terms of Church-communion, or of the just Grounds of Separation. He also observes the same Thing, *App.* p. 24. I join with Mr. *Lawson*, and I think it is lamentable that many, who have the Root of the Matter in them, have so little Knowledge of the true scriptural Terms of Church-communion; and hence it is, that there is so much of a blind Conjunction as Members of the same Ecclesiastical Body with Judicatories who carry on a Course of Defection and Backsliding from the Lord, and who refuse to be reclaimed, after the ordinary Means have been used for this Effect; and I am afraid Ministers are highly culpable, and may be justly charged with cherishing and supporting such Blindness and Ignorance, when they advance and maintain the above or the like lax Principles, concerning Church-communion, which I have mentioned.

There is one Thing I must notice, which Mr. *Lawson* confidently asserts, viz. "That, between the Years 1638 and 1649, these Meetings, that are called Society-meetings, were discharged;" I suppose, he means by the Assemblies of this Church. These Meetings that go under the Name of *Society-meetings*, are Meetings of a few for joint Prayer, and for Conference with one another, for their mutual

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mutual Instruction and Edification; and I affirm, that such Meetings were never discharged in any Period of this Church. And tho' Meetings of this Kind, as well as any other Ordinance of God, may be abused; yet, to discharge such Meetings, would be to fly in the Face of their Warrant from Scripture Pattern and Example, as *Mal. 3. 16.* And I reckon that Mr. *Lawson* throws a Reproach upon this Church, when he affirms so positively, that such Meetings were discharged during the Period he mentions. As for the Assembly's Directory for secret and private Worship, *Anno 1647.* no such Meetings as I have mentioned are discharged; but the Meetings of Persons of diverse Families, which had a Tendency to the Hindrance of the religious Exercise of each Family by itself, or which were to the Prejudice of the publick Ministry, are justly disapproved.

Mr. *Lawson* thinks fit to represent the present Judicatories as a Reforming Church, particularly after the Year 1733; he alledges Matters were grown much better since that Time, *Letter*, p. 13. But I have given several Instances, *Def. Chap. 2. Sect. 6.* wherein I shew, that, instead of being better, the present Judicatories are, in the Instances which I mention, worse since the foresaid Year. I illustrate this with respect to some of these Instances, *Chap. 3. Sect. 4.* of this *Continuation.* Mr. *Lawson* complains of the Seceders, That they have by a violent Schism put all into Confusion, *App. p. 29.* That they have hindered and crushed in the very Bud a glorious begun Work of Reformation, *App. p. 26.* These are very heavy Charges against the Seceding Ministers; but in the mean Time they are most unjust. And this appears, if we consider what is advanced by Mr. *Lawson* in the *Page* last quoted, where he says, "I believe, that the far greatest Part of the Ministers and Elders of this Church are grieved for all the Corruptions and Defections that are therein, and are much for a Work of Reformation, and against Defection." I wish sincerely it were so; but I want to see a Ground for this Faith which Mr. *Lawson* doth express: I am afraid, if the Testimony of most be taken, it will amount to this, that there is no such Thing as Defections or Corruptions in this Church. If Mr. *Lawson* believes, that the far greatest Part of the Ministers and Elders of this Church are of the Disposition he mentions; I ask him, How could the Secession of such a small Number hinder, crush or stop a glorious begun Work of Reformation? Nay rather, if such a Work of Reformation was stopt, it is an Evidence that the greatest Part by far had not Reformation.

mation-work at Heart: And tho' I doubt not but some have been and are truly desirous of Reformation, yet I am much afraid that the great Things which Mr. *Lawson* boasts have been done, have been rather a Political Feint amongst many, than a steady Resolution to go on in Reformation-work; and the Proceedings of the two late pretended Assemblies confirm me in this Suspicion.

Mr. *Lawson* lays several general Charges against the Seceders, such as; "That severals of their Pamphlets for Separation are stuffed with the greatest Falshoods and Calumnies that the Father of Lies or the Corruption of Men can invent: That the Word of God is wofully misapplied, wrested and abused, to serve the corrupt Purposes and Designs of Men, &c. Letter, p. 15." And he concludes his Postscript with affirming, "That the Seceders have been left to make many wide and unwarrantable Steps, very inconsistent with our Reformed Covenanted Principles, and the true Design and Interest of the glorious Gospel." When the above general Charges are laid without any particualar Condescension, they deserve no Manner of Notice or Regard: They discover indeed the Spirit of the *Letter-Writer*; but they can neither convince nor inform these he calls Separatists. Mr. *Lawson* thinks fit to express himself in a very warm and keen Manner against the Seceding Ministers; he rails upon them as Schismatics; he charges them with causing great Disorders, with rendering Evil for Good; he alledges they are become the Instruments to set Fire further into God's Sanctuary, and to raise the Flame, when the Anger of the Lord has divided us, Letter, p. 13. I shall leave him to please himself in such Railing; only I must tell him, That if he writes me again with so little Reason and Argument, and in a Stile that favours of so much Rancour, he must excuse me if I do not notice his Letters, whether he thinks fit to publish them or not.

The Reverend Mr. *Lawson* concludes his *Appendix* with a few Advices, as he calls them, to Ministers, Elders, and all Church-officers and others. Tho' I will not in a Writing of this Kind take upon me the Character of an *Exhorter* to Ministers, yet I approve of the most of the Advices that Mr. *Lawson* gives; and I wish particularly that his first were followed, namely, That Ministers and Elders would adhere to, maintain and contend for, all the Parts of the Doctrine, Worship, Discipline and Government of this Church, and the whole of our valuable Covenanted Reformed Principles, cost us what it will: I am perswaded, that, if the present

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Judicatories were shewing an uniform Disposition this Way, the present Secession would soon be at a desirable Period. I join with him likewise in the Advice which he gives in the Words of Solomon, App. p. 34. *Be not righteous over much, neither make thy self over wise.* I reckon, Self-confidence, and leaning to our own Wisdom, the Root and Spring of many Evils both in Walk and Practice; and particularly, of such an Union and Communion with a backsliding and degenerate Church, whereby the Redeemer is robb'd of the Glory of a particular, full and free Confession of him, in Opposition to the Injuries and Indignities that may be done him in his Person, Truths and Members: And therefore, whereas Mr. *Lawson* "intreats the Repentance and Reformation of all Seceders, and that they may join in Communion with this Church in as honourable and good Terms as can be obtained;" In Return to his Advice, I judge it is the Duty of all the Seceders earnestly to pray, that the Spirit of Repentance and Reformation may be poured out upon the present Judicatories, and all such as are in Conjunction with them, yea, upon all Sorts of Persons in our Land, whether Seceders or not: Until Repentance and Reformation take Place, it is in vain to think of a desirable and lasting Union. And may the same Spirit of Grace be given to all the Seceders, that they may abide singly, steadily and humbly in the Confession which they profess to make of the Truths of our Lord Jesus Christ, in Opposition to that Current of Lukewarmness, Defection and Backsliding, that runs with such Force and Violence in the present Day and Time!

F I N I S.



Geo. Skinner May 22th

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С П А Р

On the 1st of January 1881, the following persons were present at the meeting of the Association of the Friends of the African Race, held at the residence of the Rev. Mr. J. H. Williams, and were present with the same persons, and the other persons in the following manner:



